

# Disability Now



K18 'CRYSTAL' TAPTURNER  
Now fitted with moulded soft liners  
so that it can be permanently left on  
the tap. £6.39

**Homecraft**  
OF LONDON SW17 7SF

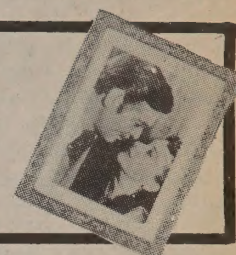
Are you  
sitting  
comfortably?  
4



Criminal  
treatment?  
5

How I stood  
on my own  
two feet!  
8

Win our quiz!  
Take a trip to  
romance 9



Simon Crompton

## Clarke's Bill survives but ACC opposition fuels Government concern

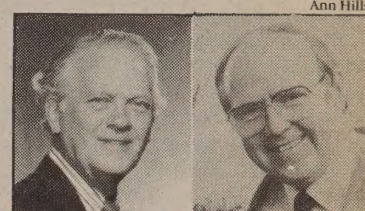
A rare moment of cross-party unity was reached in the House of Commons on 17 January when the Disabled Persons (Consultation, Services and Representation) Bill was given an unopposed Second Reading. The Bill was introduced by Tom Clarke, a Labour MP, but speeches from the Government benches were equally enthusiastic.

The Bill aims to improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of services for mentally and physically disabled people and mentally ill people and to give them a say in decisions about their lives (see page 3).

The only dissenting voice was that of Barney Hayhoe MP, Minister for Health.

He greeted the Bill with "sceptical neutrality," and said that it would have to be changed "substantially and radically" to win Government support at the committee stage.

Much of his argument was based on a briefing from the Association of County Councils received that morning by MPs.



Hayhoe

Clarke

The ACC opposed the Bill on three counts.

1 It would distort the priorities of social services departments at the expense of client groups such as children and the elderly.  
2 "The new procedure puts the initiative firmly in the hands of the disabled person... which is likely to lead to a demand led service for which money would not be provided."  
3 The Bill would lead to excessive bureaucracy.

Amanda Jordan, The Spastics Society's lobbyist, finds it hard to believe that children and elderly people would lose out. "Even if the Bill did lead to a new emphasis it would only help to redress the balance which has un-

*Continued on page 16*

## At last, a consumer guide

Many disabled people still do not know that the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970) puts a statutory duty on local authorities to assess their needs for services - such as a home-help, house adaptations, a telephone - and provide them.

Now, 15 years later, a guide has been produced that gives them all the information they need about what they are entitled to under the Act and how they should go about claiming their rights. It also tells them about services provided under more recent legislation, such as the 1981 Education Act, and includes sections on independent living and getting a job.

Finally it says: "If you are unsure about your entitlement to any service or benefit, CLAIM. It is your legal right to do so. They are your services; do not be afraid to use them."

Getting the best out of your Act is the result of a combined effort by 13 national charities led by The Spastics Society. They are concerned not only that dis-

abled people do not know what services are available but that they are being refused these services on grounds of cost.

"As I understand it, the Prime Minister has said that local authorities are obliged to fulfil their duties under the Act," said Jack Ashley MP, at the launch of the guide in the Commons last month. But although the DHSS has welcomed the guide there has been no clear statement that the rights of disabled people come before financial constraints.

Richard Bloomfield, a barrister who works with NETWORK for the Handicapped, wanted the guide more widely distributed in all social services departments, post offices, doctors' surgeries and citizens advice bureaux.

His other concern came from his experience of litigation. "We've got a wonderful Act, but it's a shell," he said.

Faced with a good individual case, a local authority will grant a service, but the principle is not extended to other cases.

The courts will deal with cases of principle or policy, but will not make specific recommendations. For example, they will say that there has been a wrong assessment of home help, but not how many hours of home help a person should have.

"We desperately need some form of reform to secure enforcement of the Act," he said.

The Guide is free (send SAE) from The Spastics Society's lobbying department. Braille and tape versions from RNIB.

## Blistering attack on ALACs

Mary Wilkinson reports

The DHSS could save £11m out of the £70m it spends each year on the wheelchair and artificial limb services provided at 30 artificial limb and appliances centres. That money could then be spent on dual-purpose powered wheelchairs and lightweight "specials" for 3,000 severely disabled people, "whose needs are greatest".

This is the view of an independent working party chaired by Professor Ian McColl, a surgeon at Guy's Hospital, which has produced the first comprehensive review of ALAC services for 33 years.

The DHSS was so concerned about the services that it set up the working party in May 1984 to review all of them - artificial limbs, wheelchairs, surgical appliances, vehicles and artificial

eyes - and to make recommendations for improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

The report reveals ineffective, outdated management and financial control, over-staffing, and a lot of dissatisfied customers. For example, the Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (ASBAH) reported that 9 out of 10 young people with spina bifida are given wheelchairs that are unsuitable or unsafe, and Mary Marlborough Lodge in Oxford said that 40 per cent of the people they see are uncomfortable in their wheelchairs or need some improvement made.

In the artificial limb service a few companies have a virtual monopoly, says the report, and the DHSS is not able to control their costs, prices or profits.

So widespread are the deficiencies that the working party has

*Continued on page 12*

## INSIDE

Letters to the Editor.....	2
Lord Snowdon hits out.....	3
Month in Parliament.....	3
Are you sitting comfortably? .....	4
Criminal treatment?.....	5
Home from home.....	6
International: Sweden/India .....	7
How I stood on my own feet... ..	8-9
Win a trip to Europe! .....	8-9
Viewpoint .....	10
Outlook .....	11
Brr! It's cold outside .....	12
Local Group news.....	13
Margaret Morgan .....	14
What's On and Classifieds .....	14

**WESSEX MEDICAL EQUIPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**

Dept. 34  
Budds Lane  
Industrial Est.  
Romsey  
Hampshire  
(0794) 522022

**TRAVELMASTER HOIST**

**ROMSEY ELECTRA-HOLST**

**MANUFACTURER OF ELECTRICAL HOISTS, STAIRSEATS AND LIFTS. AGENTS FOR THE MEDIC BED. POOL LIFTS. ELECTRIC DOOR OPENERS.**



# Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

## Embryo research: end does not justify means

Having read the two articles in *Disability Now* (December) on embryo research – Peter Thurham's speech and the Executive Council's decision – I think it important to point out that many people, able-bodied and disabled alike, would certainly not agree with the use of embryos in medical research.

Research into handicap is paramount, but not at any price. The misuse of human life does a grave disservice to humanity, to the able-bodied and people with disabilities.

Your article spoke of emotional material being used to shock in the fight against embryo research, and I can understand very well how people can become emotional about this subject. But leaving that aside, there are many good and understandable arguments against embryo research in the areas of morals, the natural law, and the commandments of God.

The church is anxious that as much research as possible be done into the prevention and cure of handicaps and disabilities, into the care of the handicapped and disabled, into promoting the full integration and acceptance of people with disabilities into society.

But the means are just as important as the end.

All life is sacred and we should all be anxious to protect and value it. Our society is in grave danger of devaluing it.

Medical research is vitally important but there is a line to be drawn. If we now oppose embryo research we can draw back from the edge of a precipice.

We would be much better employed in moving toward revaluing human life, no matter at what a stage it might be at.

I remember some years ago thinking it impossible and unthinkable that human embryos could be used for medical research. I wonder if in a few years' time I'll be writing to you protesting against the use of children with disabilities for medical research. Unthinkable you might say; I wonder.

**Fr Christopher Webb**  
Department for the Physically Disabled  
Westminster Diocese Social and Pastoral Action  
73 St Charles Square  
London W10 6EJ

## Educating the workers

Like Carol Sharkey, ("Are you just going to sit back?" *Disability Now*, October 1985), I too found the workers in Beaumont Products eager to improve their knowledge and skills.

Beaumont Products (Plymouth) is a workshop for physically handicapped adults.

The manager's aim is to equip as many workers as possible to compete for work on the open market. But he, too, came up against the barrier of low academic performance. So, with the help of the MSC, he set up an education unit with myself as co-ordinator, 5 tutors and a clerical assistant. The project started in July last year.

I spent the first week interviewing candidates for the tutors' jobs and getting to know the workforce (known to the unit as "students").

I ordered typewriters for students who have difficulty holding a pen and calculators for those who wanted to do shopping. Beaumont Products already owned a BBC Basic Micro Computer, a Welcome floppy disc and a BBC User Guide.

I expected about half the workforce of 42 to "enrol" as students. In fact 40 wanted a go.

All teaching is done on a one-



Bob and Jennie Donaldson entertain the Princess of Wales.

## Views, please

After I had become confined to a wheelchair, my wife and I built a house to suit our family's particular needs. On its completion we began a project providing wheelchair-accessible farm holidays. This has been open for 4 years.

Other disabled people might have tentative thoughts about "self-build" as a means of obtaining a home to suit their taste and needs plus a valuable asset. To encourage this, we wish to arrange a course here bringing

together professional/technical advice and our practical experience.

To determine its feasibility we would be pleased to hear from any of your readers who might be interested. No further commitment would be assumed.

Topics for other leisure/craft courses would also be welcomed.

**Bob Donaldson**  
Gorslwyd Farm  
Tan-y-Groes  
Cardigan  
Dyfed SA43 2HZ

to-one basis, each student having half-an-hour's tuition every other day. We work a fortnightly timetable. I would have preferred longer sessions, but we have to operate within the works timetable.

Although we have been going for only a short time, the increase in confidence in the students is very marked.

One man, who had never used a typewriter before, has written to all the makers of battery-operated wheelchairs asking for details and demonstrations, and has finally chosen one.

Another student, severely spastic and deaf, now "talks" through the typewriter.

Yet another took a calculator on holiday and was able to do his own shopping for the first time.

In fact, every student is finding life a lot more interesting, with new horizons opening beyond the four walls of their home and their work place.

**Mavis Chandler**  
Plymouth Works  
St. Mowden Road  
Marsh Mills Industrial Estate  
Plymouth PL6 8LH

## Ghostly goings on at Castle Priory

Those of you who have taken courses at Castle Priory College may be interested in an experience I had there just before Christmas.

The meeting I was attending had been long and by the end of the day we were all tired.

The others decided to go out for a drink but I elected to go to bed early. I was sleeping in Room 5.

I fell asleep quickly. There was no bump, or a noise or anything like that. Just a feeling. A feeling of presence, that somehow I was no longer alone.

I looked towards the foot of my bed and there, silhouetted by the moonlight shining through my open window, stood the figure of a man.

I had not seen his like before; at least not in the flesh. He was around 45 years. A fringe of hair lay along his forehead beneath a black tricorn hat. Clothed in a full-length gown, he wore an elbow-length black cape.

He said nothing. He just stood and looked at me.

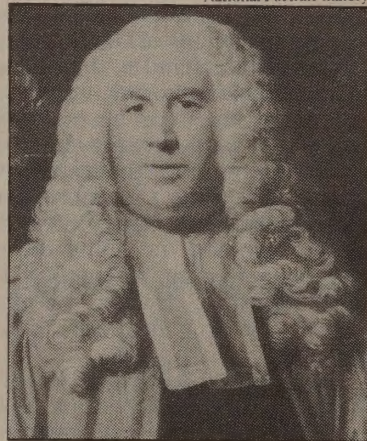
I glanced at my alarm clock. By moonlight I saw it registered just 3.30 am.

Gently he turned and walked the two paces to my door. As he opened it a shaft of light from the lamp in the hall just flicked the wings of a bat swooping over his shoulder as he passed into the hallway. He closed the door.

All remained completely silent.

To make sure I was not dreaming, I switched on my bed-side lamp and again looked at my clock. It was just after 3.30 am.

National Portrait Gallery



Judge William Blackstone

I lay and thought. I had recently returned from the USA. Their most famous British legal figure was Judge William Blackstone whose *Commentaries* influenced the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution. I had only a few days ago visited the House of Representatives on Capitol Hill.

Judge Blackstone acquired Castle Priory in 1753 and kept it till his death in 1780.

Has anyone else seen him?  
**Bill Hargreaves**  
16 Wembley Park Drive  
Wembley, Middx

## Worth our salt

Please find enclosed a donation of £10 for *Disability Now*.

Some of the things I read in it nowadays raise my hackles. But this is as it should be. Any newspaper worth its salt should be raising some hackles, somewhere, in every issue.

**John Eve**  
"Buidhes"  
104 Banstead Road South  
Sutton  
Surrey SM2 5LH

(sic)

A new diary column devised by Simon Crompton and Alan Durant

## Saints

The details of award winners provided by Action Research for their annual Snowdon Awards (see page 16) tends to read more like the Lives of the Saints than descriptions of young people about to embark on further education or training. Quoting character references from friends and acquaintances, it transpires that of the 6 described 4 are "cheerful", 2 have considerable or remarkable "strength of character", 2 have a lively sense of humour or quick wit, one has a "very happy disposition", one is "a joy", one is "gentle" and one is "blessed". It might need adding that every one is also human.

## Inescapable

County Hall, on London's South Bank, is generally reckoned to be one of the most accessible central London gathering points for people with disabilities. So it was rather disillusioning to find that at last month's meeting of disabled people protesting at the Government white paper (see page 16) only one lift could be used by the 150 or so people with disabilities. The other lifts were unusable because they were approached by steps. The Spastics Society's Brian Lamb and Alan Kerwin adventurously tried to escape via the Central Lobby. Finding this impossible, they wound their way through the labyrinths to an un-signposted exit for disabled people. It took them half an hour.

## Smoking

The Westland confrontation may have dominated the front pages this new year, but an equally heated battle has been smouldering on the inside pages – smoking. Tobacco is fighting back. The Tobacco Advisory Council suggested in a tart letter to the *Daily Mail* that the proper way to deal with the smoking issue is with "common sense, courtesy, consideration, tolerance and efficient ventilation." Evidently they've never sat upstairs on a 24 bus in rush-hour.

For its part, the tobacco industry has engaged battle and very craftily enlisted the aid of Research Services of Great Britain, thus contractually preventing them from repeating the work they did for the Health Education Council last year in support of National No-Smoking Day. While the smoke clears, you might be one of those who wishes to take your cut of the 2,000 years of human life expected to be saved by National No-Smoking Day on 12 March. Research has uncovered 3 unlikely allies to the giver-up, according to the No-Smoking Day's publicity: knitting, bragging and betting. However, according to Professor Julian Peto of the Institute of Cancer Research, by far the most effective way of stopping smoking is "to have a heart attack". Especially if you die, I'd imagine.

Contributions, please, to DN

NEW!

## The Travel Seat with complete flexibility



You can now enjoy complete travel flexibility with the new Travel Seat from MarketAbility.

It's a giant step forward in ease and convenience for those who have been denied car travel or have had difficulty getting into and out of a car. Not only is entry and exit now simple and easy but the trip itself will be made even more enjoyable due to the latest developments in seating design which are incorporated in the Travel Seat.

And the Travel Seat fits most cars without major alterations.

At a price you can afford.

For more information, send the coupon below to:

**MarketAbility, Mobility Information Centre,**  
**Copthorne Community Hall,**  
**Shelton Rd.,**  
**Shrewsbury SY3 8TD**

Yes, I would like more information about the new Travel Seat from MarketAbility

DN8512

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Car: Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_



# "Every disabled person is a first class citizen and should be treated as such"

## Lord Snowdon hits out at discrimination, politicians and manufacturers\*

It is now 5 years since the International Year of Disabled People, the year when we started this small award scheme. I say we, because I could not have done it without the financial and moral support of so many real friends.

Did that year have much effect? Or was it just another year of such years - on a par with the year of "whatever" - which seemingly come and go with many speeches but little lasting concrete effect.

On the whole, I think things have improved a bit for the benefit of disabled people, but not nearly enough; nor has progress been made nearly fast enough. If it had, this scheme would not now be necessary at all.

Certain people in the corridors of power have recently caught on to realise that if they mention "the disabled" (and they always seem to use that label, rather than referring to people as people, which we do all happen to be) it is a good vote catcher and shows "concern and caring", however shallowly felt in truth privately.

Still, sadly, many people in control of our lives consider disabled people a nuisance and a minority group that should just be referred to when it suits them - to make believe that their needs are being thought about more than they really are. They totally ignore the abilities and intellects of physically handicapped people. As a start it would not be a bad idea if they studied the outstanding achievement of

those who have won our award over the last 5 years, despite the needless hardships they've had to contend with.

If the media or some strong individual makes enough fuss about a specific degradation, eventually something, sometimes, does get done - but as an exception rather than changing the rules and regulations for the benefit of all disabled people. There are a few more toilets dotted around and the mandatory

ramp or two, but that is about it.

The mobility allowance is still far from satisfactory. The rate of unemployment for disabled people is still grossly, unfairly and unacceptably high. Architects, engineers, town planners and the bureaucrats at the top have still not really woken up to the basic problems of striving for equality and basic rights.

Every disabled person is a first class citizen and should be treated as such.

Why, for example, does someone like Stephen Bradshaw (director of the Spinal Injuries Association) who is quite able to look after himself and many other people as well, have to have a "chaperon" (at his age) to go to the Royal Festival Hall, run by the "caring" GLC, just because he happens to be in a wheelchair? (I rang them this week to check and they fobbed me off with that old, feeble excuse: "Basically it is in case there



Nick Oakes for Therapy Weekly

is a fire".) Incidentally, it doesn't happen at the National Theatre.

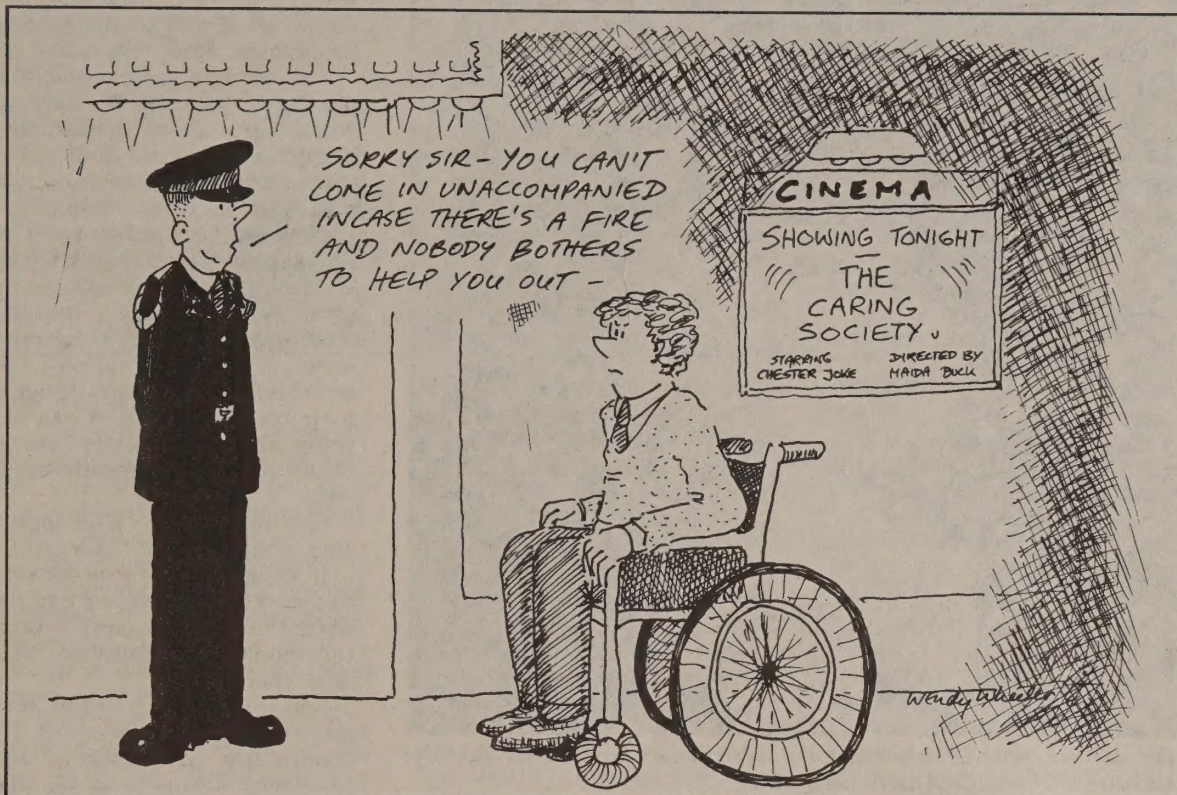
Last year I complained about access at Euston and other stations, but little has changed.

One thing that has, is that the word "disabled" is being slung around more and more to the disadvantage of disabled people and to the advantage of certain profiteers and greedy manufacturers and retailers of various costly, so-called "aids for the handicapped" - from unstable powered wheelchairs, to inefficient, wildly expensive hearing aids; from dangerous personal elevators to poorly adapted motor cars, and ineffective electronic gadgets for blind people - not to mention all those small ads in the colour supps, claiming a total new freedom for the disabled, conning them into forking out a fortune for some ill-designed product.

Surely, disabled people have got enough to put up with, without being "taken for a ride" by these growing, highly profitable businesses.

These cowboys should provide an essential service at the right price, and not cash in on the less fortunate in our society.

\* This is part of the speech given by Lord Snowdon at the annual Snowdon Awards presentation, see page 16.



## MONTH IN PARLIAMENT



### HOUSE OF COMMONS

## Tom Clarke's bill gets unopposed 2nd reading

Tom Clarke's Private Members Bill which seeks to give disabled people a stronger hand in decisions which effect their lives was given an unopposed second reading in the Commons on 17 December.

The Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Bill has sponsors from all the main parties.

Moving its second reading, Mr Clarke said of his Bill: "It is about consultation - the right of individuals to be consulted about services to them and the right of organisations of disabled people to be consulted about general services."

"The Bill is about representation, principally the right of disabled people to appoint a representative to speak for them. Above all, it is about crisis prevention."

He went on to say that the Bill further recognised that disabled people were uniquely qualified to contribute to decisions about

their needs, and that they represented an untapped resource for society having great potential, not simply for individual achievement, but for the enrichment of the whole of society.

The Health Minister, Barney Hayhoe, told the house that he supported the principle of the Bill but many of its provisions were a recipe for inflexibility, bureaucracy, legalism and waste.

The Bill had substantial cost implications, he said, and the Government would only help it to reach the statute book if there were radical changes at Committee stage.

### Main provisions of the Bill

Clause 1 allows a disabled person to have a representative present at all assessments and examinations of his needs.

Clause 2 lays down improved assessment procedures with better co-ordination and access to the information by the disabled person or his representative.

Clause 3 provides that a local education authority should make a report to the social services on a young person leaving full-time education; the social services should then make an assessment of that person's needs.

Clause 4 requires hospital managers to give social services departments 28 days notice of the discharge of patients treated for mental disorders providing the patient or his representative give consent.

Clause 5 enables carers to call for an assessment of their own needs when they feel unable to cope.

Part II of the Bill seeks to ensure that there is more consultation between disabled people and

public and voluntary bodies (including town and country planners about access).

Part III improves joint planning in Scotland.

## Bill to protect children and vulnerable adults fails to get 2nd reading

Patrick Cormack MP (Con) who came seventh in the Private Members' ballot, presented his Criminal Records Bill for second reading on 17 January.

The Bill would enable local authorities to have access to the criminal records of any person seeking care work with children and vulnerable adults. The aim of the Bill was to protect this group from physical, sexual or economic abuse by people who have been previously convicted of relevant offences.

Naturally, none of the speakers were at odds with these aims but there was disagreement about how best to achieve them.

Giles Shaw, Minister of State at the Home Office, gave the Government's view that an "administrative route" was preferred to "a legislative route". The Government hopes to bring in new arrangements from 1 April, which cover paid and volunteer staff in local authorities and the NHS. It is estimated that as a result of these arrangements about 100,000 extra checks may be made each year in such areas as teaching and social work.

"Because of the impracticability of checking on everyone who has any access to children or other vulnerable people, which must run into several millions, the arrangements that we prop-

ose are limited to those appointed to positions giving opportunity for substantial access to children," said Giles Shaw.

The Bill also offered guidance on other groups of people considered to be vulnerable.

Despite Mr Cormack's plea to the Government to think again about legislating, his Bill did not receive Government support and failed to get its second reading.

## Prescription charges up?

The Government's expenditure plans which have been published this month suggest an in-

crease in prescription charges.

The income anticipated to come from NHS charges is expected to rise from £362m this year to £430m by 1988-89. Although there has been no official statement about increased charges, it seems likely that this rise in expected income may come from higher dental and drugs charges.

## EDM for carers

An Early Day Motion calling on the Government to take urgent action to improve the position of those who care for disabled and elderly relatives at home has been tabled and now has 112 signatures.

Sharron Saint Michael



I see from your columns that there is talk of setting up a caravan site in the Richmond area. Why don't they locate it in Petersham? After all, they've dumped everything else here - the stables, the Polo Club, the monstrosity of a German School, the Spastics School, the Queen Elizabeth College Haven for Drunken Yobboes, everything that no one else would tolerate...

Letter from P. W. Daniels, Richmond and Twickenham Times - Simon Crompton

Disease victim Claire faces new struggle... Following a lifelong struggle against a crippling dis-

ease, a 23-year-old Wadebridge woman now faces another struggle to go on an adventure of a life-time. Claire Tregaskis... has been selected to take part in Operation Raleigh, a four-year, round-the-world expedition.

Headline and news story, Cornish Guardian - Andrew Ross

Householders on Pedmore's exclusive Hagley Road fear their property could be devalued if plans to open a home for the mentally handicapped are given the go-ahead... Mother of two Jenny Tromans, who lives across the road, said: "I'm appalled. This is a residential area and there is already one old people's home. Surely that's reasonable. 'This is a high class area. It's not appropriate.'"

County Express, West Midlands - Jan Hook

Please send your contributions (not forgetting the source and your name) to Watch it! Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.



Not often if you are in a DHSS wheelchair, says John Adams, manager of The Spastics Society's Douglas Arter Centre, who contributed to the ALAC Review that has just been published. At Douglas Arter they've developed their own wheelchair tailored to individual needs - for £90.

How much thought do you give to seating? Take a moment to consider the chair you are sitting on.

The Furniture Industries Research Association calculates that 4 seats are manufactured for every member of the population. That doesn't include wheelchairs.

Does your chair provide you with a satisfactory posture or, like so many chairs, was it bought more with an eye to cost and taste rather than the part of your anatomy which will use it?

The motor car industry thinks a great deal about seating and spends both time and money designing car seats, but however good the seats are after a journey lasting, say, 4 hours you are likely to be feeling restricted and uncomfortable.

Now compare the common experience of car seating to that of wheelchair seating. In relation to the car industry only a tiny amount of money is spent on wheelchair design and yet people are expected to sit in wheelchairs for up to 15 hours a day.

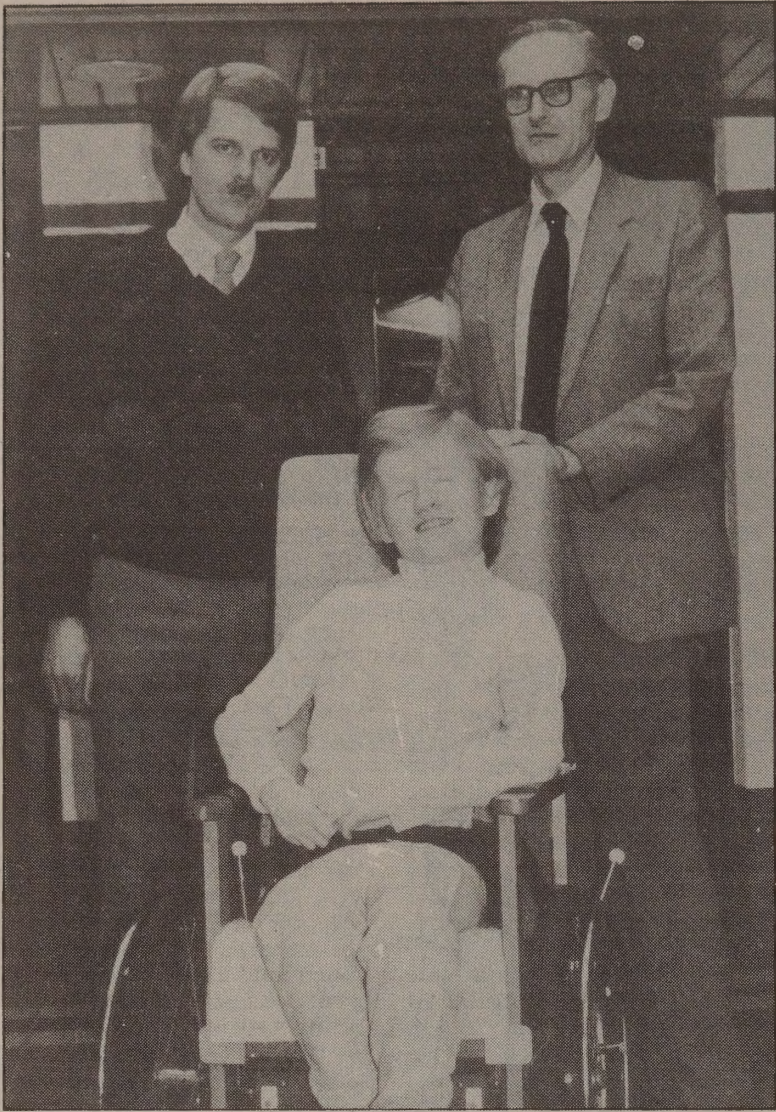
Car seats are generally designed for the able-bodied using principles of seating and ergonomics relating to human anatomy with some adjustment to suit individual choice.

On the best car seats you might have as many as 9 separate adjustable features. Such a flexible range of positions not only allows for varying sizes but also presents an opportunity to vary posture over a period of time - an important requirement.

Wheelchairs, however, have additional design considerations, the most obvious being that wheelchairs are not static and many are designed to fold up and fit into a car boot.

In my opinion it is a mistake for designers to concentrate on the folding principle when what is actually required are two

## Are you sitting comfortably?



Teresa Miles relaxes in her tailor-made wheelchair. Behind are John Adams (left) and Dr Austin Isherwood.

chairs, the living chair and the transit chair.

The challenge for living chair designers is to incorporate the best features of static chair design, exploiting the extensive research that goes into mobility seating in cars, planes and so on and adapt some of these seating systems for disabled people.

With this in mind, the Douglas Arter Centre seating programme was set up in early 1984 under the direction of Dr Austin Isherwood, a former lecturer in ergonomics at Loughborough University, and a consultant both to Douglas Arter and the Bath Institute of Medical Engineering.

First we had to find a commercial manufacturer of a static chair with good basic seating qualities who would be prepared to produce chairs to individual measurements. The cost of these chairs had to be kept to a minimum as our long term aim was to develop a modular seating system without the high cost of individually-made chairs. We found Renray Products (UK) Ltd who could make customised

chairs for £80.

The next stage was to make this individually tailored static lounge chair mobile. This was comparatively simple. The chair just lifts on to a chassis (see right) and no bolts or straps are necessary. Within seconds, the chair becomes a wheelchair, retaining all its good seating qualities.

From this prototype we removed the original chair back and worked on a contour system that offers the sitter good postural support.

This was the most difficult part of the project. More than 90 separate measurements went into the one chair back. Much of our work involved studying body shape and its measurement. For measurements to be accurate the base line needs to be constant and this is extremely difficult with the human anatomy.

Postural support is necessary for many reasons, not least to extend the range of what people can do and, hopefully, to reduce their handicap. But for postural

support to be truly effective, good pelvic stability must be achieved. From this you begin to see the complexity of designing for individual body shape.

Currently we are making postural support systems to suit the profoundly multiply-handicapped students at Douglas Arter Centre. So far we have completed one individually-made chair for about £90.

We have not entirely solved the problems of postural support, but the overall effect of the chair is a 50 per cent improvement on the ALAC (Artificial Limb and Appliance Centre) chair our student had before.

For several of the students we have been unable to find any suitable commercially-produced chair and so the seating programme must continue.

But our recurring problem is getting things made. We have no workshop - more importantly, no technician - and funding for this rather unglamorous research is difficult to obtain.

It would be good to see The Spastics Society taking the lead and using its own manufacturing facilities to produce a modular seating system. There is no sense in people with cerebral palsy suffering poor wheelchairs design if their own organisation can develop and build better wheelchairs than are currently available.

Our findings are also applicable to a much wider user group.

In Douglas Arter's submission to the ALAC Review, we emphasised the inadequacies of both the supply and quality of available wheelchairs.

It is not simply a question of more money. Those with responsibility to prescribe and issue wheelchairs must see that it is bad seating practice to fit the customer to the chair rather than the other way round.

It is crucial that the ALAC Review should consider design. If it does not address itself to the question then the report will be worthless.

Looking through the DHSS handbook of wheelchairs is like looking through a 1930s catalogue, so outdated are many of the designs. Designers must pay attention to fashion in shapes and materials; they should be aesthetically pleasing as well as cost effective, safe and functional.

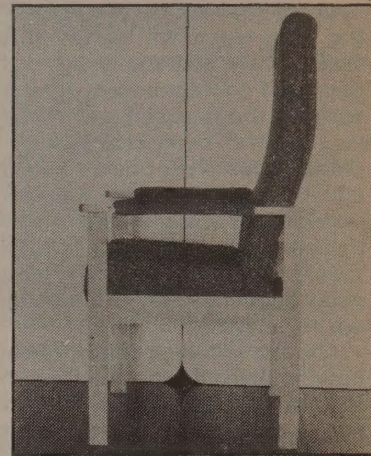
Too many aids for disabled people are of mediocre quality and thus contribute to their rejection because of the stigma involved.

More thought must be given to the chairs we buy or prescribe if we want to reduce handicap. It is our aim at the Douglas Arter Centre to find alternatives to second rate seating.

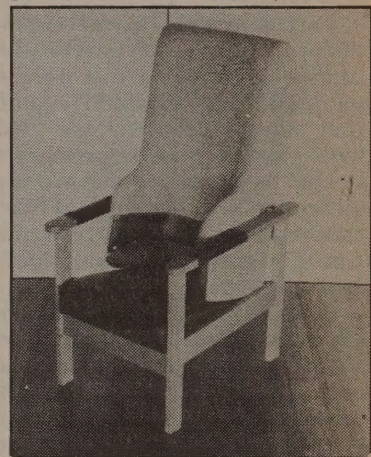
The Douglas Arter Centre, Odstock Road, Salisbury, Wilts ST5 4JL, tel: (0722) 20318.

## Stages in the development of a custom-built wheelchair

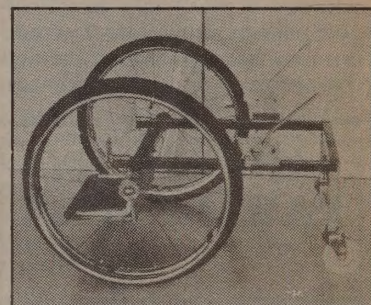
Fritz Macauley



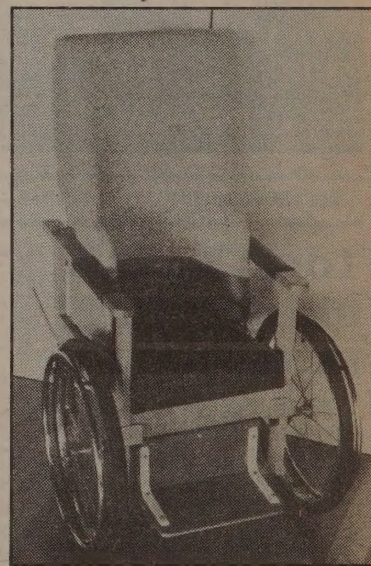
1 The full size chair showing good basic seating qualities.



2 The individually-made chair, built to size with moulded back for postural support.



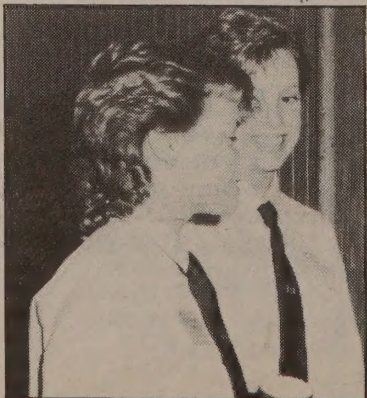
3 The simple chassis for the individually-made chair.



4 The Douglas Arter chair.

## School sets up a mini-enterprise company

Design Centre



Clare Spencer and Georgina Williams - designers of the Fold-a-bag.

The Fold-a-bag - one of the winning entries in the Design Council's 1985 Schools Design Prize - has now gone into production in a mini-enterprise scheme at a school in Gwent.

Georgina Williams and Clare Spencer of Monmouth Comprehensive School, designed the bag for wheelchair users. It clips to the underside of the arm rest and can be opened, concertina style, across the lap and clipped to the other side (see *Disability Now*, December).

The bag is being manufactured and sold through a company - Minnow Enterprises - set

up and run by students at the school. It forms part of their work on the theme of 1986 Industry Year.

"This is serving as a practical way to learn how companies operate," commented Barbara Wright, head of Textile Design at the School. "We have run similar schemes before, but then it was purely hypothetical."

Altogether some 200 students are involved through their regular lessons, from 3rd year upwards. 5th and 6th formers sit on the board of directors; commerce students deal with the sales, money, invoicing and dis-

patch; metalwork students weld the metal clips; and textile students cut out the fabric and make up the bags.

The girls who designed the Fold-a-bag are no longer directly involved with the project but continue to take an interest in how the company is doing.

If you would like further details about the Fold-a-bag, please send a SAE for an order form to Minnow Enterprises, Monmouth Comprehensive School, Old Dixton Road, Monmouth, Gwent NP5 3DP. It costs £4.95 (plus postage).



There's no such thing as a free lunch - and *Disability Now* is no exception.

The newspaper costs The Spastics Society 40p a copy or £4.80 for a year's supply. At the moment it comes to you free.

If you enjoy reading *Disability Now* and would like to see it continue, please send us a donation. £1 or £1,000, everything is welcome!

Please make out cheques and postal orders to The Spastics Society, and send them to

Gayle Mooney  
Room 2B  
*Disability Now*  
12 Park Crescent  
London W1N 4EQ.



● Steven Burden, a blind and mentally handicapped 24-year-old, pleaded guilty to obtaining £3.03 by deception – pretending he was collecting for the blind – in July last year. He was imprisoned in Strangeways Prison for 3 weeks while reports were prepared, before being released with a deferred sentence.

● Glenn Pearson, who is deaf and dumb, was sent to prison in November for allegedly stealing £5 and 3 light bulbs. Having initially been sent to prison, he is now in Harmston Hall Hospital for the mentally handicapped.

● Mandy Larder, aged 19 and mentally sub-normal, spent 4 weeks including Christmas in prison for breaching a probation order imposed for breaking 2 windows. There was no room in any suitable hospital.

Those are just 3 recent stories of people with mental and physical disabilities suffering unfairly at the hands of the English legal system. All received some publicity, not just because of the obvious mismatch of offence and punishment, but because justice was seen not to be done to a group of people, whether guilty or not, merely *because* of their disabilities.

Might they not reveal dangerous loopholes in our legal structure when disabled people have to face criminal proceedings?

'Are such cases the rule rather than the exception?'

And with increasing numbers of mentally ill and mentally handicapped people being released from long-stay hospitals into the community, doesn't the question of how they should be treated at the police station, in court and in prison demand increasing attention?

There are signs that such issues *are* beginning to get attention.

The Greater London Council's Disability Law and Legal Services Conference in October last year was the first meeting of its type in Britain. It was designed to encourage the concept of "disability law" and to bring together isolated lawyers with an interest in disability.

### Growing awareness

There are also 2 bodies consisting of people within the legal profession who have an interest in disability law.

One is Network, started 10 years ago as a voluntary group giving free legal advice to parents of handicapped children. It now has a full-time staff of 3, and a membership of 20 advice workers, solicitors and barristers, giving advice on everything from social security benefits to vaccine damage.

The other is the Law Society Group for the Welfare of People with a Mental Handicap. Formed 2 years ago, this has a membership of 150 solicitors in private practice, barristers and social workers.

The group, which has working parties on guardianship, civil rights, education, financial provision and welfare rights, advises people with mental handicaps of their rights – especially under the Mental Health Act. It also endeavours to improve the law where it is seen to fail.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to a growing awareness of the vulnerability of people with disabilities when faced with the legal system, is the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, introduced on 1 January.

The Act gives a person detained by the police greater rights to contact friends and legal representatives. If he is deaf, blind or mentally handicapped,

# Criminal treatment?

Simon Crompton asks if the scales are weighted against disabled people accused of breaking the law



he has the right to a friend or interpreter.

One section refers specifically to mentally handicapped people. It says that their confession should be made in the presence of an "independent person".

The legislation attempts to preclude the repetition of a miscarriage of justice as happened with the Confait case of 1972 when a mentally handicapped man confessed to the killing of a man and was consequently sent to Rampton Special Hospital. 3 years later it was found that it was impossible for him to have committed the crime.

Bearing the Confait case in mind William Bingley, the legal officer at MIND, believes that the code of practice which accompanies the Act is particularly important.

"Mentally ill or mentally handicapped people are vulnerable at the pre-trial period not necessarily because of nasty police", he says, "but because of the problems of extracting reliable testimony from them. The code has recognised that vulnerability and is quite innovative."

It is worth noting, however, that the Act and code do not make it compulsory for an independent person to be present – a confession extracted without an independent person present has to be treated with caution, but it is not inadmissible.

It remains to be seen whether this "beefing up" of procedures which were already recommended in what is known as "The Judge's Rules" will produce any practical benefit, but William Bingley is hopeful.

"The police are becoming much more conscious of the number of people being released from psychiatric hospitals, and much more aware that the person they remove from a public place may have a mental health problem," he says.

### Trial problems

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act covers only the first stage of criminal proceedings. As the cases of Glenn Pearson and Steven Burden show, the trial itself and how a disabled person pleads also can produce problems.

Is the difficulty in the law itself, or a lack of knowledge on the part of judges and magistrates?

Jack Rabinowicz, a director of Network, believes that education at all levels is a better solu-

tion than changing the law.

"If a judge or magistrate appreciates that a person is having difficulty understanding or being understood, the person is always entitled to an interpreter in court," he says. "The police and magistrates have to learn that a deaf mute is a deaf mute and not stupid. Changing the law takes an awful long time."

### Change the law

For all that, there is currently a strong body of feeling that the law *should* be revised because without changes judges are powerless to prevent injustices to disabled people under certain laws.

The Glenn Pearson case exemplifies the dilemmas judges face. Glenn Pearson is deaf and dumb and unwilling or unable to communicate through sign language. He was charged with stealing £5 and 3 light bulbs in a burglary, but the Lincoln Crown Court jury, having decided that he would be unable to understand the charges put to him and unable to instruct his solicitors, found him "unfit to plead".

Under the Criminal Insanity Act 1964 this left the judge with no alternative but to put him in "a place of safety" (prison if no hospital bed is available) until a hospital place could be found where he could be detained *indefinitely*.

Glenn Pearson is now detained in a hospital for the mentally handicapped awaiting a mental health tribunal. Pearson's solicitor, Paul Bacon, is hoping for a conditional discharge, but he's having to fight a Home Office doctor who believes that Pearson needs communication therapy in hospital.

"In my opinion that's stupid," he says. "Had Glenn not fallen foul of the law for some comparatively measly offence, then no-one would have thought of putting him into a mental hospital."

The problem is that, because of his inability to communicate, Glenn Pearson has become subject to a law originally intended for people with mental disorders, and people who might quite conceivably present a danger to the public.

That it can be applied to people because of a physical handicap is, says Paul Bacon, "a nonsense".

"Some people have argued that Glenn is mentally handicapped," he says, "but psychiatrists still don't know if he is. Even if he

were, he shouldn't be in a mental hospital."

Clearly, here, the law does not take sufficient account of the nature or degree of the disability – nor the severity of the offence allegedly committed (whether he murdered or stole £5, someone found unfit to plead will be sent to a secure institution to protect society).

Because of this loophole, MIND and the British Epilepsy Association, with the backing of the parliamentary all-party penal affairs group, are drafting a bill to amend the Act and widen the discretion judges have in the disposal of such cases. They would like to allow 3 options: complete acquittal, deferred discharge with a condition of receiving out-patient treatment, and assessment at a special hospital.

Such discretion should also be allowed, they say, where an offender is judged "not guilty by reason of insanity": that is, having a mental disorder at the time

of the offence.

At the moment "insanity" is still defined in law by a set of criteria called the "M'Naghten Rules" laid down in the last century.

The outdated rules along with the present lack of discretion given to judges, can create travesties of justice as occurred in the case of R v Sullivan in 1983. Sullivan was an epileptic, accused of hitting someone, who wanted to plead not guilty because the assault happened while he was having a fit: he didn't know what he was doing. But in court Sullivan found that if he pleaded not guilty he would fall under the M'Naghten definition of insanity and would be sent to hospital indefinitely. In the end, he was forced to plead guilty.

Even if the law is amended, another problem faces judges handling cases involving disabled people when it comes to sentencing.

The current case of Mandy Larder from Wells exemplifies how the nation's lack of facilities for people with mental handicaps is forcing judges to treat people who commit minor offences as criminals.

On 20 December, 19-year-old Mandy Larder, who has a mental age of 8, was given 3 months youth custody at Taunton Crown Court for breaching a probation order imposed for breaking 2 windows. The judge, Kenneth Willcock, said that the ideal place for Mandy would be a secure hospital. But there was none suitable in Somerset, Devon or Cornwall.

"It is nothing less than a scandal that this position has been reached," he said. "This girl can progress in the right setting, of that we have proof."

He said that Mandy's problems showed "glaring loopholes" in the system, and added that prisons were being used as the dustbins of the social services system.

The solution? William Bingley is concerned about the shortage of regional secure units for people with mental difficulties, but

*Continued on page 7*



EQUIPMENT FOR THE HANDICAPPED

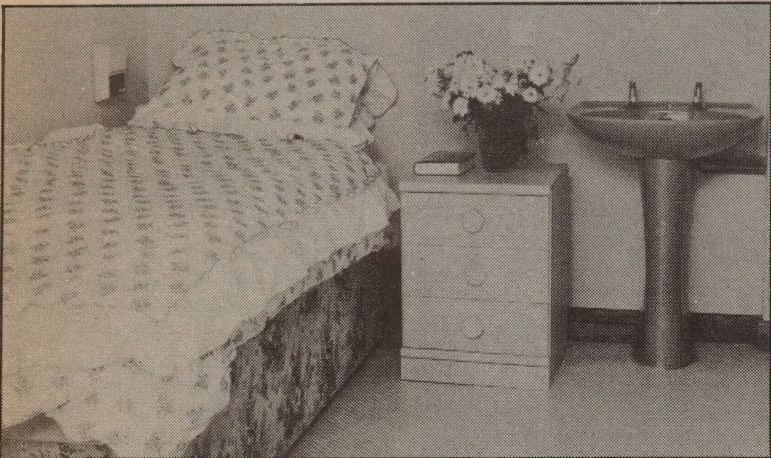


A wide variety of special furniture and equipment for the handicapped child  
Fully illustrated CATALOGUE available free  
Robertsbridge E Sussex TN32 5DR phone 0580 880626





Above: Bill Murphy talking to residents. Below: a typical bedroom.



## Home from home, a new style of residential care

Lin Berwick visits "Belamacanda" to see how well it works

Belamacanda is a dream come true for Anne and Bill Murphy.

In what must be a very unusual departure, they have extended their own bungalow to make a home for 6 disabled people as well as themselves and their 3-year-old daughter, Helen.

Anne Murphy has seen the good and bad of residential care: she worked in residential homes and schools run by the National Children's Homes and in a secure unit for young offenders where the units were large and impersonal.

Bill Murphy is head of Chigwell House, a residential home for disabled people in Essex.

Belamacanda tries to create the image of a country cottage. It has a beamed ceiling, red brick fireplace and brass ornaments in the living room.

The individual bedrooms are rather sparsely furnished, but residents are allowed to bring their own belongings and choose their own wall paper.

Near the kitchen there is a

utility room for residents, with a sink, washing machine, spin drier and ironing board set at wheelchair height. There are two toilets and a shower room, but no bath.

A lot has been crammed into the small garden. On two outside walls of the extension there are raised beds at wheelchair height to attract gardeners. There is a sunken pond, a paved area, and a confined area for a chicken, two ducks, two dogs, a cat and a rabbit. A Solardome is to be put up on the paved area which should give residents more privacy.

The age of the residents ranges from 26 to 49 and their handicaps are not too severe. The Murphys hope they will become more independent as time goes on, and they encourage residents to go shopping and make their own decisions.

Living in close proximity to other people is never easy: you have to learn to adjust and make compromises like an ordinary family, yet you have not been

brought up together and nor do you have the same opportunities to "escape" as you can even in a large residential home. One resident has already found the family atmosphere too much for him.

Others seem very happy. The care staff (the Murphys and two others) and the domestic staff have a one-to-one relationship with the residents, and for some of them it is the first time they have been seen as individuals rather than patients.

A resident who showed me round has acute arthritis and had spent much of her time in hospital units. She has now been at Belamacanda for a few months and says it is the first time she has felt settled.

Hopefully this home from home can be a source of inspiration for others working in residential care. But residents need to be chosen very carefully.

Bill Murphy, Belamacanda, Plough Corner, The Street, Little Clacton, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex.

## HOW BRITISH GAS HELPS ELDERLY AND DISABLED PEOPLE

British Gas has a long-standing and continuing commitment to caring. That's why we offer a variety of services for elderly and disabled people.

### WE CAN GIVE ADVICE ON:-

- 1 Free gas safety checks for elderly and disabled people who live alone. ☐
- 2 Special help for physically and visually handicapped people. ☐
- 3 Fuel saving. ☐
- 4 Paying for gas. ☐
- 5 Gas safety. ☐
- 6 Appliance servicing. ☐

Tick the subjects which interest you and send this advertisement to FREEPOST, British Gas, P.O. Box No. 671, London, NW3 5JF and we'll send you our helpful leaflets.

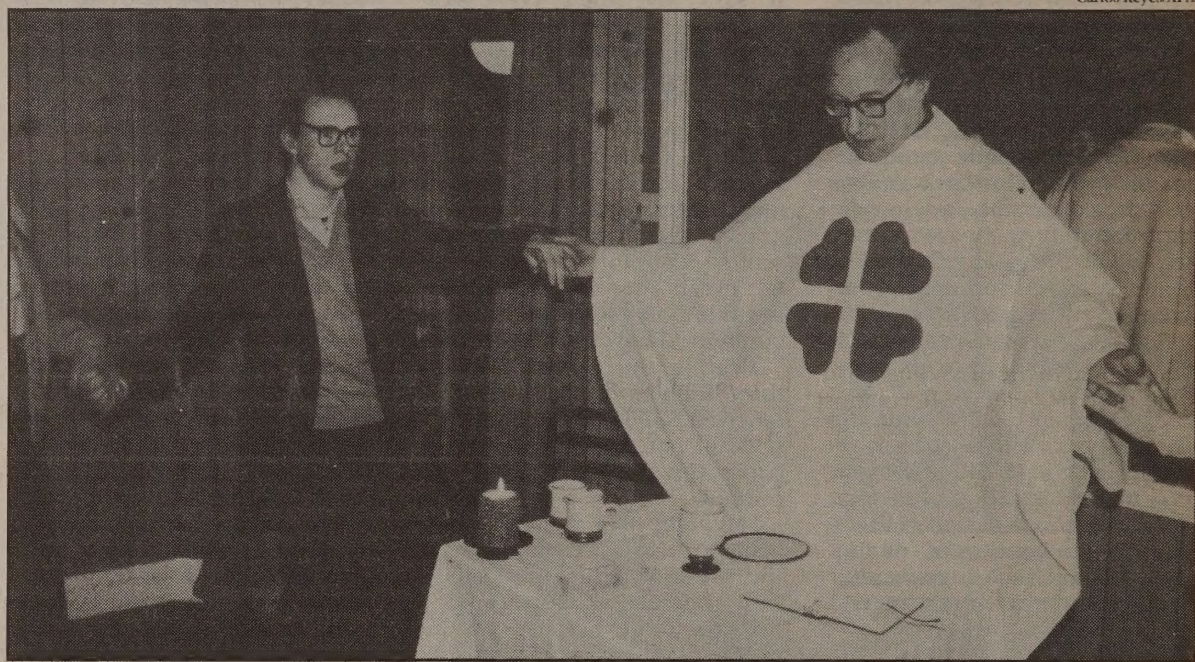
Name

Address

I am a member of the caring professions ☐

DN.

**British Gas**  
COMMITTED TO CARING



The Rev David Wilson celebrates Mass at St Joseph's Pastoral Church.

## New people in the parish – how will the church cope?

Rosemary McCloskey, a tutor at Castle Priory College, and a training officer at St Joseph's Centre in London, introduces 2 books and a course for ministers and lay people

What answer will Frank get as he eyes the church bookstall, wondering, "Have you got any books for me?"

It could be the *St Joseph's Mass Book*, especially designed and beautifully illustrated for the older mentally-handicapped person who wants to use a prayer book. It is already a best-seller among Roman Catholics and Anglicans.

Frank and many other adults with mental handicaps will, if current policy proceeds, be coming to live in our towns and cities.

As doors close for them on the worshipping community of the large institutions, others, it is hoped, will open for them outside; parishes which are alert to their special needs and want to absorb them into their networks in a way which is fitting for their age and self-esteem.

We know that Frank will be helped by professionals to develop "coping" skills, both domestically and socially. But will people in the local churches make the same effort to understand his needs and incorporate

his particular gifts into church life? There is evidence that it is happening, but for some people the transition can be bleak, lonely and isolating.

In April, a course at Castle Priory College offers ministers and lay people from different denominations the chance to discuss how, in both practical and theological ways, they can involve people with special needs in church life. It will tackle questions such as how best to help people with communication and learning difficulties in worship; how to provide support for families, and how the Christian church can develop the role of advocate for its new parishioners.

Brian Easter, Anglican chaplain to two hospitals in the South Birmingham and Solihull Health Authority, will be speaking. He has recently contributed to a new and thought-provoking book on the pastoral care of mentally-handicapped people. *Let Love be Genuine* discusses the practical difficulties of families, the kind of support which is needed and wrestles with some

of the theological difficulties.

Other speakers on the course will include the Rev David Wilson, director of St Joseph's Pastoral Centre in London; Sister Helen Doremus from Chicago, who is running programmes for mentally-handicapped adults in London; a representative from the Baptist Union and from Advocacy Alliance.

*St Joseph's Mass Book* by Sister Stephanie Clifford, Collins 1985, 95p.

*Let Love be Genuine*, edited by Faith Bowers, Baptist Union, 4 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AB, £2.50 plus postage and packing.

The course, "Pastoral involvement of people with special needs in church life", runs from 14-16 April. Apply to the Principal, Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE, tel: (0491) 37551.

Rosemary McCloskey will be writing a full-length article on the transition of mentally-handicapped people into the community for the May issue.

Carlos Reyes/APA



## Swedish minister for the disabled is disabled

Lars Ekenborn



Bengt Linqvist

In a stroke of logic which seems to have eluded other European governments, Olof Palme, Sweden's prime minister, has appointed a disabled person to be Minister for the Disabled.

Bengt Linqvist, 49, an ex-teacher and broadcaster, entered the Swedish cabinet last October as deputy minister for social affairs with special responsibility for family policy and matters concerning disabled and elderly people.

As Sweden's first blind MP he had been representing the interests of disabled people in Parliament since 1982. In fact his criticism of Social Democratic government policy left him surprised when he was offered the job.

The tradition of disabled people speaking for themselves is enshrined in the disability movement in Sweden, where most organisations are run by disabled people, not for them. Bengt Linqvist has been chairman of the Central Committee for the Handicapped since 1977, an umbrella for about 30 national associations of disabled people with a total of some 350,000 members.

His elevation into the government may be seen partly as an acknowledgement of the influence which these organisations now have in Swedish society.

One of Bengt Linqvist's first duties was to steer through the Swedish parliament a bill which ensures that the demand for pre-school places in day nurseries, family day nurseries and play groups will be fully met by 1991 for every child over 18 months, and that there will also be enough places in leisure centres for after-school recreation for young children. (Local authorities are responsible for the child care programmes and receive state subsidies.)

This year a government committee will be putting forward a programme for future services for the elderly, bearing in mind that 17 per cent of Sweden's population is over 65, and increasing.

One of Bengt Linqvist's main aims is to improve employment possibilities for disabled people. He is also interested in the opportunities offered by computers. He himself uses advanced computerised Braille and synthetic speech aids which come mainly from the USA and Japan.

It is said that his compressed speech tape recorder enables him to "read" twice as fast as most sighted people and that using a special metal pad and pencil he can take notes as fast as anyone else.

After a long, tiring journey on a British Airways jumbo jet, broken by the sight of desert at daybreak from the cockpit, we arrived in Bombay to discover that a foot-rest was missing from one of the wheelchairs! Poor Graham had to survive the first week by putting both feet on his one remaining foot-rest. Eventually it was returned to us, but not before it had gone on to Australia and New Zealand.

We spent our first week in Bombay at the Bombay Spastics Society school. The staff and pupils were really excited at meeting us since the project, named "Passage to India", had been planned for two years.

We presented the school with a photograph album of our school, a calculator, 2 folding wheelchairs, that had been made good-as-new, free, by the company who services our wheelchairs, and a few other educational gifts. We did have an article in our local newspaper appealing for gifts to take with us, but the response had been disappointing.

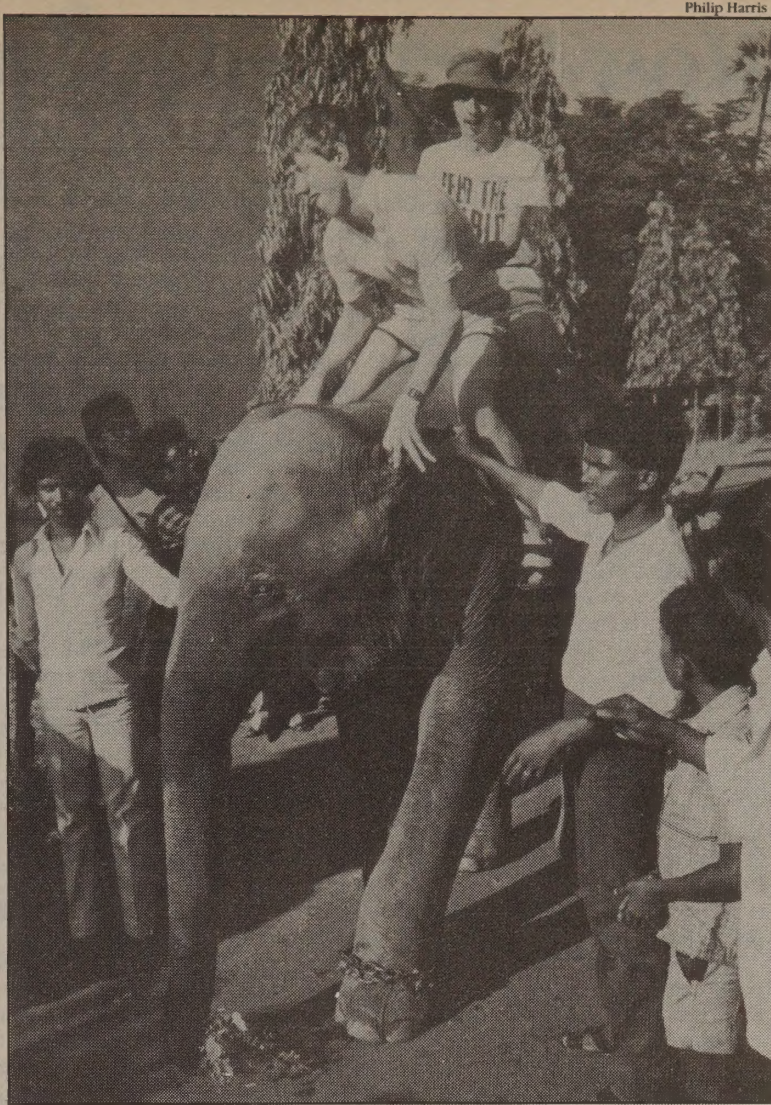
The Bombay school was on 2 floors and looked out over the sea. Between lessons the enthusiastic welfare assistants had to sling pupils over their shoulders and carry them like sacks of potatoes up and down stairs.

The equipment they had, educational and physio-aids, was often old and in short supply but they managed remarkably well with what they had, sharing them between several children. The lessons seemed formal compared to what we were used to and much of their work was geared to exams.

We stayed at the Y.W.C.A. in Bombay.

While we were out one day, a vulture whose nest was just outside our bedroom flew into the room and attacked the cleaner. When we returned, he showed us the scratches on his face. He was very shaken. He explained that the vulture had babies in the nest and wanted to protect them. What with that and the lizard above our bedroom door, we were surrounded by Indian wildlife!

We spent one day at the Bombay film studios. They make more films there than at any



Elephant riders, Graham Peet (front) and Nicholas Drum in Bombay.

## Their passage to India

When Edward Duff, Nicholas Drum, Ray Daniel and Graham Peet of Martindale School, Hounslow, set off on the first leg of an exchange with the Bombay Spastics Society school, only Nicholas had been abroad. With Philip Harris, one of the teachers who went too, they have put together this report

other studios in the world.

We saw one film being made. For lighting they used aluminium sheets to reflect the sun.

While we were there we saw a lion and had a ride on a baby elephant.

Another day we visited Mother Theresa's hostel for destitute people. It was a very clean

place, yet there were people in every available space. The nuns never turn anyone away. Sister Cabrina who runs the hostel told us that Mother Theresa now has hostels all over the world, even 2 in London.

We spent a week in the beautiful coastal resort of Goa with pupils and staff from the Bombay

school. We had a wonderful time there with parties and fireworks every day because it was the annual Festival of Light. It was like being in paradise.

From Goa we travelled to Agra to see the Taj Mahal.

Unfortunately, architects in India don't cater for handicapped people and so we had to be lifted from place to place, which was rather uncomfortable for both us and our teachers. The Taj Mahal itself is particularly awkward for anyone who is disabled.

From Agra, we finished our tour in Delhi. It was a real contrast to the noisy, bustling streets of Bombay and the tranquility of Goa. It was the most "westernised" place we had been to in India.

We visited a school which had begun integrating handicapped pupils with able-bodied children. We explained that this was the trend in the UK too. As the project had just begun it was difficult to tell how successfully the experiment had been.

We also visited the Delhi Spastics Society School. They had just moved into a new building. The headteacher said it was the first purpose-built special school in South East Asia.

There was not enough room for all the pupils who wanted to go there, so one department was set aside for parents to visit once a week in order to teach and do physiotherapy with their children at home – a sort of do-it-yourself special school!

We had a tremendous time in India. Now we look forward to having a group from the Bombay Spastics Society School staying with us in the summer.

*Apart from concessionary fares from British Airways and £700 from the Commonwealth Youth Exchange, the school has had to find all the funding for the trip. The Bombay Spastics Society School could not afford to help. Now Martindale is raising money to help bring over a group from Bombay. If you would like to contribute to this worthwhile exchange, please contact Mrs Guin Boyd, headteacher, Martindale School, Martindale Road, Hounslow TW4 7HE, tel: 01-570 9169.*



About to tackle the Taj Mahal.

### Criminal treatment?

*Continued from page 5*

isn't convinced that they, or special hospitals, are the answer for people like Mandy.

"People like her need highly-staffed ordinary units within the health service," he says. "They need social training, not treatment. But there's no disposal for mildly handicapped people."

Paradoxically, it is minor offences which seem to reveal the failings in English criminal law when confronted with disability. It is also minor handicaps which have revealed both the importance of a knowledge of disability amongst police and judges, and the importance of appropriate places of confinement.

Undoubtedly, progress is

being made in custody and in court through education and revision of the law. There are already concrete examples of that – not only in Police and Criminal Evidence Act, but also in projects such as a MENCAP film, which is being produced in co-operation with the police, designed to acquaint policemen with the problems of dealing with mentally handicapped people.

But for all the signs of progress, it is a depressing prospect that as long as the health and social service system remains starved of cash and commitment, people with disabilities will still find themselves unfairly in prison or special hospital, and justice will be seen not to have been done again and again.

## ONE COMPLETED COUPON AND DISABILITY NOW IS ANYONE'S

Disability Now is the newspaper for disabled people and professionals in the disability field. And it's free! Every month it brings you:

### NEWS

What's going on in Parliament, around the country, abroad and in The Spastics Society.

### VIEWS

Professional and personal on anything to do with disability.

### INFORMATION

about benefits, conferences, services, aids and equipment, holidays, sport and leisure.

### FEATURES

on politics, travel, motoring, micro-technology, fashion, books, the arts and personal problems.

If you're not getting Disability Now – or you know someone who isn't but would like to – just complete the coupon below.

Please put me on the Disability Now circulation list

NAME .....

OCCUPATION .....

ADDRESS .....

Send to Gayle Mooney, Circulation Supervisor, Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ (Donations gratefully accepted).



# How I learned to stand on my own feet

Maggie Stronach tells what she achieved on a 6-months independent living programme

Last year The Spastics Society launched a special independent living programme at Broadstones Hostel, Birmingham. It is a national resource available to Society social workers who identify a need for independence training among disabled people living in residential centres or at home with elderly parents.

Supervised by occupational therapist, Ann Humpherson, 6 disabled adults (3 men and 3 women) spent 6 months living in purpose-built flats in the grounds of Broadstones.

The results have been impressive, as Maggie Stronach shows.

"None of the group has returned to hostels," says Ann Humpherson, "and they've all altered. Physically they've become more skilful, and mentally they are much more self-confident."

However, the future of the programme is in jeopardy - for lack of occupational therapists. Ann Humpherson is leaving, and the programme now needs 2 OTs urgently.

I had lived at Rockingham, Rotherham for 6 years and in residential centres ever since my parents died 20 years ago.

Then, at the beginning of last year, a complex of flats and bungalows for disabled and elderly people was being built near the

hostel and I was asked if I would like to move into a flat.

I said I would like a flat of my own. But I knew that to move straight into total independence after the protection of the hostel would be impossible, so it was suggested that I applied to go to Broadstone for the independent living programme.

I said I would give it a try, but I hadn't a clue what to expect. In fact, I was terrified!

Now, 6 months later, I know that it was the best move I ever made.

I started my course at the end of June.

The day after I arrived I had a long chat with Ann Humpherson, the occupational therapist in charge of the 4 flats, about what I could and could not do for myself. We established an individual programme plan for my own particular needs, and I could discuss any problems or difficulties on a one-to-one basis with Ann.

The first 2 weeks we concentrated on personal independence. With Ann's help, patience and understanding, I was soon able to bath myself with the aid of a bath board and seat. It is a wonderful feeling to be independent with such a personal thing after 39 years of always having someone to help me.

Soon after mastering the bath I was able to wash my own hair. It might sound as if I got to do these things in 5 minutes; in fact it took a lot of hard work and help from Ann before I could do them alone. Ann did not leave

me to bath or wash my hair until I told her I felt confident to do so.

The next thing I found I could do was to dress the lower part of my body without having to sit on my bed (though I still have to do so to put on tights.) Both my legs are very stiff and often go into spasm, and I have great difficulty in bending them at all. But again with the help of aids such as a "knicker-stick" for pants and trousers and a "helping hand" for shoes, plus lots of practice, it was achieved.

About this time I also started cutting my own nails and putting nail varnish on by myself. This may sound easy, but my right hand and arm are very stiff and I find it hard to position my hand when I want to use it.

In July I started to go shopping for food. This was a completely new experience. At the hostel you never think how much food costs or even how it gets on to the plate.

When I first went out shopping with Ann I had no idea how much things cost or even what sort of washing powder to buy. It is a challenge to get things down off shelves - especially if like me you are only 4ft 6in - and at the same time cope with money, a wheelchair and a shopping basket. But this causes no problems now.

In August I started to do my own cleaning in the flat. I discovered the joys of squirting cleaning fluid. I had a long-handled window cleaner and a feather duster for reaching up.

I started cooking in October, but this was limited because I have a very small appetite. My cooking includes boiling eggs, heating "boil in the bag" meals and baking one sausage and a potato. I particularly enjoy beating and prodding sausages!

At the end of the course I cooked a meal for 5 people - I did jacket potatoes to go with a heated casserole and made an apple pie served with fresh cream.

I can honestly say there is not one part of the course that I haven't enjoyed to the full.

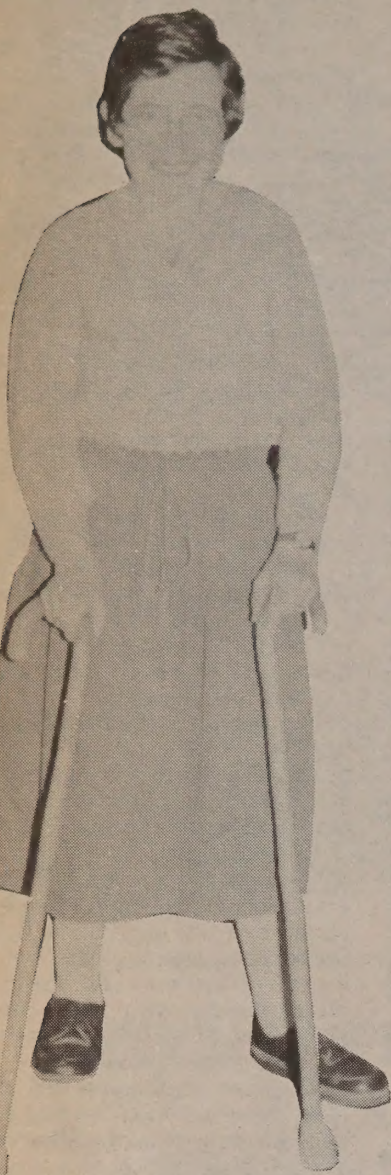
When I came to Broadstones I had been confined to a wheelchair for 20 years. I started walking on crutches and now I am having a go at walking with a pair of sticks.

No one at Broadstones will tell you what you have to do or not do. It is left to the individual, as I found out very early in the course. I am now making my own decisions about everything and not asking if it is alright to do this or that. I do what I think.

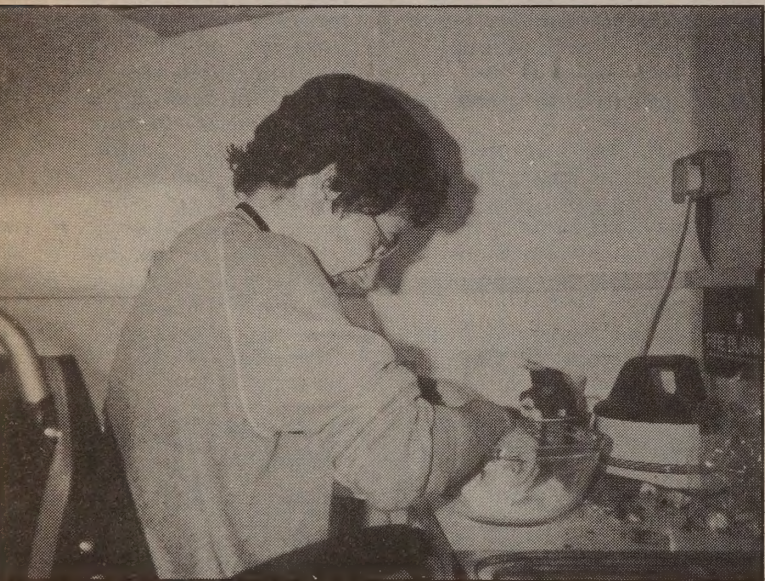
If anyone is thinking of living independently but does not want to move straight into a flat, then Broadstones is the place to go. The facilities are all there if you want to use them.

The manager and the staff were a great help, but I must say a special thank you to Ann who helped me to make the impossible possible.

For information about the independent living course, contact Graham Carter, Manager, Broadstones Hostel, Broadstone Road, Birmingham B26 2BW. Tel: 021-783 6532.



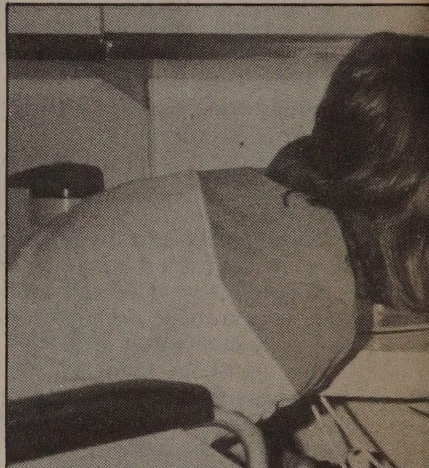
Maggie triumphant, on sticks.



Maggie making the apple pie for her party...



Sally Cox, Maggie, Ann and Lynne Humpherson after eating it.



Karen Bradshaw, a member of the group.

## Sport... Sport... Sport... Sport

### Regional Swimming Galas

## New Stars are breaking British records and challenging established swimmers

In the last 3 months there have been 5 regional swimming galas with over 250 cp people attempting to qualify for the National Swimming Gala in May.

The introduction of narrower age groupings - we now have 5 instead of 3 - and new learner and veteran events has paid off.

In all 4 categories below age 19, new British records have been set. It will be fascinating to see at the national level, where the standard will be far higher, by how much these records can be beaten.

New stars are appearing to challenge the established swimmers. Paul Hancock (Delarue School) and Helen Speak

(Sharks) emerged as potential national champions from the South-East gala.

In the Midlands, there were again good races in the Class 5 men's competition between Eric Green, Martin Mansell and Paul Heiske (all Panthers), with Mansell holding his position as Number 1 in that class.

In the South-West, the National Star Centre swimmers dominated. Helen Smith is a swimmer to watch.

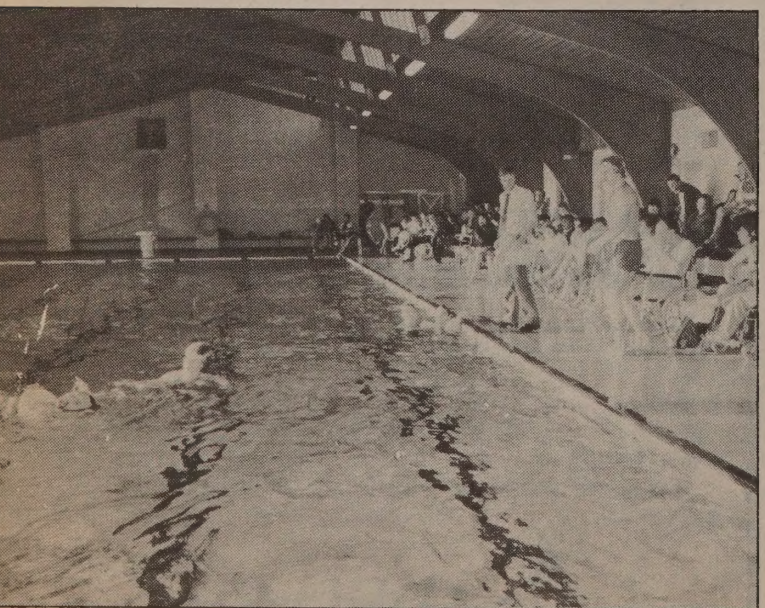
In the North-East, the standard of competition is rising every year. The strangle-hold of Beaumont College and Percy Hedley School is being broken at last by clubs like Darlington

Marlins and GOSH.

This year is the year of the 7th World Cerebral Palsy Championships which will be held in Gifs, Belgium. We are hoping to send a large England/Wales team - especially after our success last year.

If the standard achieved in these swimming galas is maintained in the athletics, we should be in for some successful championships.

For further details of this and all sporting and recreational activities, contact the Leisure Service, The Spastics Society, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ.



Gerry Hinderman from Grangewood on his way to a 2nd place in the senior 1 width freestyle with aids. Peter Pearse from Delarue won.



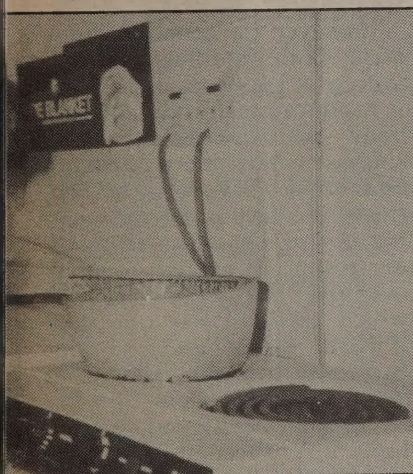
Arthur Humpherson



her new Everest and Jennings Elite chair which she is buying through ty.



uts on deodorant. It is fitted into a arm attached to a bracket.



es her teeth.

y Howard Bailey



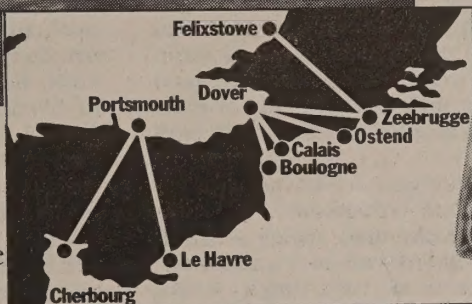
phant trio. From left, Robin Surgeoner, Massey and Christine Brown - all from more Mallards. Robin won all his races, won 3 and Christine also won 3.

# Win a trip to Europe! (worth up to £200)

To celebrate Valentine's Day this year we've devised a quiz that combines romance and travel. The winner gets the chance of a romantic trip for two, thanks to the generosity of Townsend Thoresen. Runners-up will each win two bright red Spastics Society T-shirts ready for a "him'n'her" summer. So, have a go!



First prize is return tickets for 2 and a car on any Townsend Thoresen route to Europe where available during 1986.



## TOWNSEND THORESEN



Gone With The Wind

### Disability Now Romance and Travel Quiz

Circle the correct answer and complete question 16 in not more than 15 words. Send your completed answers to Romance and Travel Quiz, *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Closing date 28 March. The judges will be Anita Maunsell, head of publicity and information, Mary Wilkinson, editor, and Chris Davies. Their decision is final, and they cannot enter into any correspondence. The quiz is not open to Spastics Society staff at Park Crescent or employees of European Ferries Group PLC and their families.

1 *Romeo and Juliet* is set in  
Padua  
Verona  
Venice

2 Where did Prince Charles and Princess Diana get married?  
St Paul's Cathedral  
Westminster Abbey  
Westminster Cathedral

3 What nationality was Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert?  
Danish  
Austrian  
German

4 What were the names of the characters that Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart played in *Casablanca*?  
Selma and Alec  
Elsa and Rob  
Ilsa and Rick

5 Who said of whom "She's always been my first lady"?  
John F Kennedy of Jacqueline Kennedy  
Ronald Reagan of Nancy Reagan  
Jimmy Carter of Rosalind Carter

6 What country did Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett elope to?  
Portugal  
France  
Italy

7 How did the Prince find Cinderella? By trying on:  
a satin slipper  
a glass slipper  
a wellington boot

8 In the novel *Rebecca* where did Max de Winter meet his second wife?  
Cannes  
Monte Carlo  
Nice

9 Which romantic poet was involved in the liberation of Greece?  
Shelley  
Keats  
Byron

10 In *Gone with the Wind*, who did Scarlet O'Hara marry last?  
R.A.B. Butler  
Rhett Butler  
Ashley Wilkes

11 From which of Shakespeare's tragedies does the line "I am dying, Egypt, dying" come from?  
*Othello*  
*King Lear*  
*Anthony and Cleopatra*

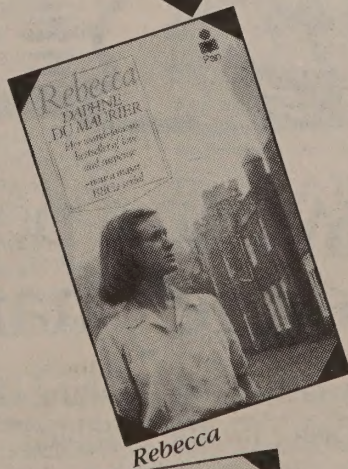
12 Where is Gretna Green?  
Cornwall  
Northern Ireland  
Scotland

13 Where did Robin Hood and Maid Marion live?  
Sherwood Forest  
New Forest  
Epping Forest

14 Which country did Rudolf Valentino come from?  
Spain  
USA  
Italy

15 Who starred in *Brief Encounter*?  
James Mason and Margaret Lockwood  
Trevor Howard and Celia Johnson  
Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray

16 My idea of a romantic holiday would be



Name .....

Address .....



## VIEWPOINT

North Herts Gazette



Samantha and her father, Tom Hulley.

## Why not change our view of normality? by Tom Hulley\*

The difference between my position and current wisdom in the provision of education for children with impairments lies in the philosophy of need.

If any needs are seen as "special" they are also perceived as different in a negative way. The children with these special needs are also defined as different.

But all children are different and all children have their own special needs.

I have enjoyed describing Sam's progress in mainstream education. She has received support and commitment but cer-

tain deficiencies remain.

She did not go to school by right.

Once, when she was an informal pupil at Shephall Green, we turned up on an "occasional" holiday. Disappointed at finding the school shut Samantha cried and banged her head. We stood together outside the locked door, forlorn and feeling like outsiders. It was nobody's fault. The school had not got into the habit of giving their part-time pupils regular newsletters.

More recently, as other ten-year-olds received invitations to visit and select preferred secon-

dary schools, Sam received nothing.

She did not truly belong although she has similar needs.

She likes school and the chance to invite her friends home. She swims and rides and loves going to MacDonalds. Don't they all? She learns at her own pace encouraged by challenges, by guidance and by opportunity. She needs her interest to be held.

I think she is more like other children than different to them.

At present, Sam is accepted in mainstream education as an exception. There has been no fundamental shift of policy. She has not set a precedent. The boundaries of what's seen as normality have scarcely shifted.

Yet we live in a society of several million people. A whole range of circumstances are familiar to us as normal occurrences: poor mobility; impaired hearing and vision; emotional difficulties; bizarre behaviour.

So why not change our view of normality?

We all require special resources to meet normal needs. The baker who only sold a standard loaf would soon be out of business.

In school it is normal to provide the special resource of a walking stick, a hearing-aid or a pair of glasses. It is not accepted as normal, so readily, to provide kidney machines, one-to-one tuition or other expensive resources. A special needs policy depends on the option of providing extra resources when funds are available. In times of scarcity, unethical and inhuman choices are made as part of a "rational" approach.

However, the economic argument about rationing scarce resources is a poor excuse.

In education, for example, nobody has attempted to re-appraise what society can afford or what needs have to be met. Could we have a shorter working day without lunch breaks? Are resources wasted on administrative and staffing systems which have become outdated? Without asking basic questions like these it is not possible to argue an economic case.

The value of integration seems to be widely accepted in principle, but not in practice. Surely the cost of extra staffing to enable transfer from special to mainstream schools is not greater than the current cost of running a separate, segregated system. . . or hasn't anyone checked?

I hope Sam stays in the mainstream, if she only socialises and has dinners there. Next, I want her to continue developing her learning in the ordinary classroom either on her own or with groups of other children of her age as opportunities are created. Lastly, I want her to belong to her school so that her needs are part of the sum of needs met by the school.

Although Sam is my daughter she is also society's child. How her needs are met in society will give an indication of our level of civilisation.



## How can a possum help the severely handicapped?

There are many electrical appliances and attachments specially designed for the elderly or disabled.

They are described in a

leaflet called "Making Life Easier for the Disabled."

It's available, free of charge, simply by phoning 01-200 0 200, or completing

the coupon below.

Among other things, it will tell you about Patient Operated Selector Mechanisms (or POSSUMS for short).

ELECTRICITY COUNCIL, ENGLAND AND WALES

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

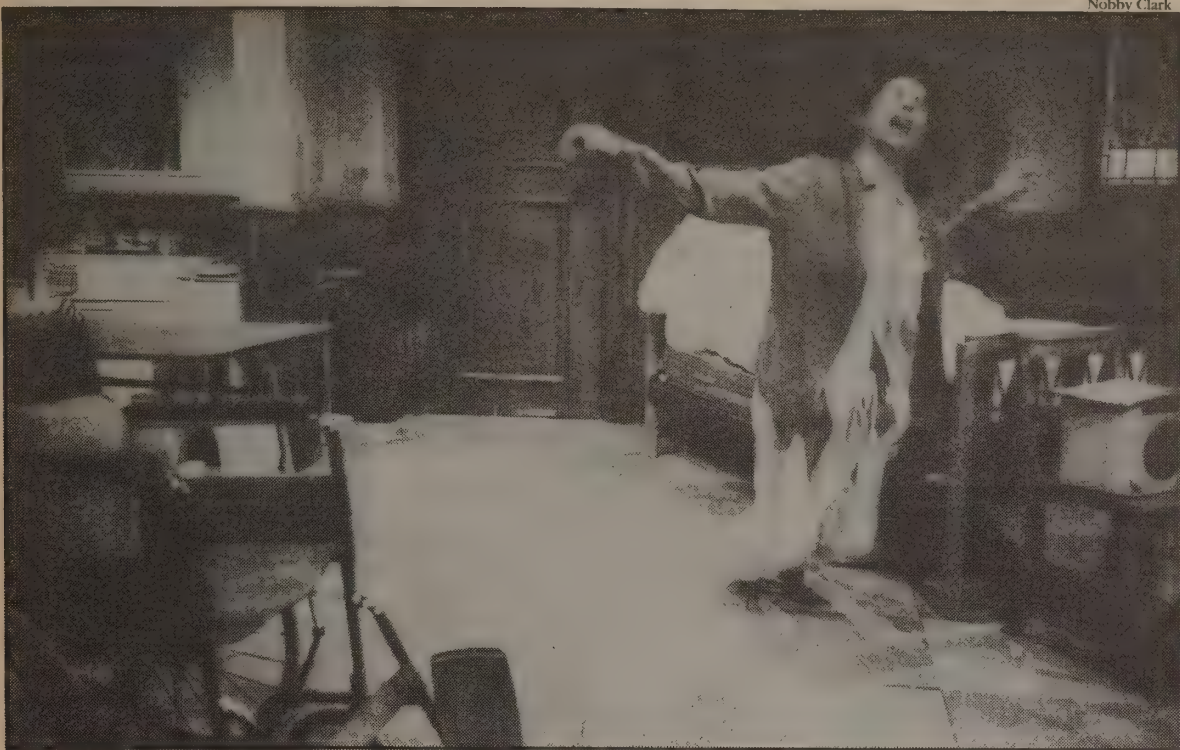
Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of Making Life Easier for the Disabled. To: Electricity Publications, PO Box 2, Feltham, Middlesex TW14 0TG. Tel: 01-200 0 200.

**HELPELECTRIC**  
We have the power to help you.

G1848

\*This is an edited version of the final chapter of Samantha Goes to School - the Battle for Mainstream Education by Tom Hulley, published by The Campaign for People with Mental Handicaps. Available from CMH Publications, 5 Kentings, Comberton, Cambs, £2.50 inclusive.





Patti Love in A Prayer for Wings.

## Theatre

### A prayer for wings

"What's the point of life when you're living on wheels?" says Rita rhetorically of her mother in Sean Mathias's *A Prayer for Wings*. It is a typically prickly remark in a play that bristles with guilt, resentment, grudging affection, boredom, irritability and the whole gamut of feelings inherent in a situation of physical dependence.

Through the artistry of designer Geoff Rose, the Bush Theatre in London is transformed into a disused church on the outskirts of Swansea. In this ambivalent setting Mam, crippled through multiple sclerosis, and her sloth-

ful daughter, Rita, spar and coo their way through their mutual, isolated existence.

Rita views her mother as "a crippled old hag" and dreams of flushing her away down the toilet. However, at other moments she is filled with remorse and tenderness towards Mam, who is likewise alternately infuriated and gratified by her plain, promiscuous and irascible daughter.

It is a love-hate relationship that is both comic and poignant, and is acted with great skill and energy by Patti Love (Mam) and Anne Mannion (Rita).

Both characters make extensive use of a theological idiom, without either really believing in the theology itself. Thus Mam claims it was "the Devil gave me the MS" and who made Rita "slow", and Rita is waiting for an

"angel" to appear and transform her life from drudgery to romance.

In the meantime, to relieve her boredom and loneliness, she'll go with anyone who'll have her, which she duly does until, in an unconvincing final *coup de théâtre*, her "angel" arrives in the shape of Phil from Port Talbot and Mam's disease kills her.

However, this is a play about people – able-bodied and disabled – rather than ideas, and the weakness of the ending is of minor importance in contrast with the considerable humour, compassion and dynamism of the work as a whole.

Under the direction of Joan Plowright, *A Prayer for Wings* is a hymn to humanity in all its courage and cantankerousness.

Alan Durant

## Books

### Sexuality and Handicap, problems of motor handicapped people

Edited by B H H Dechesne, C Pons and A M C M Scheller (Woodhead-Faulkner, paperback £19.95)

Readers may remember a book called *Not Made of Stone*. *Sexuality and Handicap* is an updated version of that book, translated from the Dutch, but with additional scientific material that makes it useful reading for doctors, paramedics, psychologists, educators, social workers and health care workers – in fact anyone who works with people with disabilities.

There are three major sections: medical, psycho-social and ethical, written by the editors and other contributors.

In the medical section, a description of the reproductive system is followed by information on specific problems caused by physical disability in both men and women. Therapeutic measures are considered including artificial insemination techniques and the use of prostheses, sex aids and drugs.

The section includes a description of the sexual problems caused by a transverse lesion, and chapters on hereditary disabilities and current contraceptive methods.

The psycho-social section of the book begins by considering a definition of "sexuality and handicap".

When a young person enters the "sexual arena" much depends on learning the erotic lan-

guage, understanding the signs etc. A disability may be a hindrance to this learning process.

The results of some research carried out by B H H Dechesne between 1974-76 are presented. Two questions especially interested the researchers. What is considered to be the ideal form of partnership? And are sexual impulses experienced in an unhindered way or is sexuality a problem area?

In response to the first question, 90 per cent of the handicapped respondents (aged 15-23) confirmed the statement "I would like to marry later" compared with 83 per cent of non-handicapped respondents. The handicapped respondents, however, saw their chances of marriage and partnerships as being considerably smaller compared with the non-handicapped group.

On the second question, the research showed that a physical disability can also create a social barrier.

Many people felt inhibited and 41 per cent even felt that their disability made them "sexually unattractive". Much depended on self-image, and people with only a slight disability were sometimes in a double-edged situation giving rise to all sorts of insecurities particularly within the family.

The authors suggest that people with a disability "should learn how to normalise contacts with healthy people by, for example, bringing up the embarrassing topic – their handicap – themselves". Both able-bodied and people with disabilities must change and "develop a new system of values in which physical

appearance and achievement are rated less highly than is the uniqueness of the individual in his situation".

The section ends with the useful chapters on rehabilitation and sexuality describing how to set up a discussion group with a programme for 6 meetings of 1½ hours each, and consideration of the role of the discussion leader.

The third section of the book is on ethical aspects.

Sexuality is described as an ambiguous experience and being able to cope candidly with one's own sexuality requires some self-reliance and maturity.

The authors point out the need for sex education, learning to cope with one's body and becoming adept at forming relationships. They explain the process of acceptance and the development of self-esteem.

The ethical implications of alternative forms of sexuality, masturbation and help during sex are explored.

"It is hoped that thinking together and the confrontation of everyone's views (those of the handicapped person as well as all people concerned with his care) will lead to the dismantling of social prejudices, including those concerning sexuality, so that insight into the needs and developmental possibilities of physically handicapped people grows, creating a suitable climate for these possibilities to be realised".

This is a stimulating and clearly written book. It's a great pity that its price puts it out of the reach of most people. But it is a must for libraries.

Dr Mary Davies

## Motoring

### The Renault Espace – a people carrier with dignity and comfort

Often in the past I have spoken about transporting disabled people with dignity and comfort. Just because somebody is disabled, do they have to be transported in a bus more suitable for taking workers to a building site?

The Renault Espace 2000 is one of the growing breed of vehicles known as "People Carriers". Specifically designed as a small mini-bus, it carries up to 7 people and has all the facilities of a large luxury saloon.

The outside looks like a Space Age van, with a low sloping front and huge windscreen. The unusual shape gives the Espace a drag factor as low as 0.32 which must make it one of the most economical cars in this class.

Inside, "luxury saloon" is the only possible description. The seats are soft yet supportive and covered with the hard-wearing fabric seen in other Renault cars. The driving position is a little different with the windscreen much further away than in most cars, but that is no real disadvantage as it gives perfect, all round vision.

The floor is much higher than in a conventional car which makes it easier to get a disabled person onto a back seat. But I did find the rear door was set a little too far forward which restricts leg space on the first row of rear seats. Although this first row can easily be taken out or tipped forward to allow access to the second row of seating, I found

that to get the leg room it was best to move the first row of rear seats back as far as possible and eliminate the second row, reducing the Espace to a 5-seat estate.

Nevertheless, the versatile seating has many advantages and I'm sure it will not be long before the conversion specialists produce a wheelchair transporter.

With a steel underbody of hot zinc galvanised on assembly and all the outer panels in plastic, the Espace should never go rusty. This makes it an excellent investment for a family with a disabled child who need to spend a lot of money on a conversion. With a conventional car that money has to be spent again after two or three years.

The high price reflects the standard of finish, but I expect this vehicle will be one of the few Renault's to hold its price well.

The 2000 cc engine power takes the Espace up to 70mph effortlessly and the fifth gear makes cruising easy. Unlike other rival vans it has been specifically designed to carry people so the suspension is exactly the same as in the expensive saloons.

John Byworth

#### Technical Specifications

Overall length	4.25 m
Overall width	1.77 m
Overall height	1.6 m
Engine	1995 cc
5-speed gearbox with power-steering as standard.	

#### Fuel consumption

56mph, 41.5mpg	
75mph, 30.1mpg	
urban cycle, 26.2mpg	

#### Price

£10,145.00 inc VAT and car tax. If used as an ambulance, it could be bought tax free, and if bought through the Renault Disabled Driver Plan then there should be a discount, although as this vehicle is so new delivery could take some time.

Further details from Disability Driver Plan, Renault (UK) Ltd, Western Avenue, Acton, London.



The Renault Espace 2000 GTS.

### The Long-Term Unemployed – Action for a Forgotten Million

by Peter Ashby (Bedford Square Press, £2.95 paperback)

*The Long-Term Unemployed – Action for a Forgotten Million* aims to place an extremely important and much neglected issue firmly on the political agenda.

What should be done to help the "forgotten million" of long-term unemployed people who at present are left out in the cold with no assistance from special employment measures, training schemes or education programmes? This is an issue which must be of particular concern to The Spastics Society, since disabled people suffer disproportionately from unemployment and, once unemployed, on average remain

out of work for longer than able-bodied people.

This extremely readable book, issued as an NCVO discussion document, does not come up with definitive solutions. It makes various suggestions, for example a Personal Development Programme which would be open to all long-term unemployed people with a credit being paid to all those who participate.

Perhaps more importantly it calls for the Government to set up a high-level Committee of Inquiry to undertake a comprehensive examination of the needs of long-term unemployed people.

With the help of voluntary organisations that are campaigning in this direction the book may help to bring the needs of the "forgotten million" to the forefront of political debate.

Eileen Fry



Kathy Johnson



**Simplantex Wheelchair Muff.** Merle Davies comments: "This is light, roomy, warm and comfortable to wear. It's easy to put on, with a full-length ring-pull zip (lay it on your chair and sit into it). I'm not keen on something that wraps around me since it can give the image of an invalid. However, this would be very useful for long walks and other outdoor activities." £49.95 from Boots.



**Rose Pink Snuggle-soft Dressing Gown** in warm thermolactyl. Sizes 10-16 £29.99, 18-24 £31.99. Damart, Bowling Green Mills, Lime Street, Bingley, W. Yorks BD16 4BH. Tel: (0274) 568211.



**Left: Dreamland's Heated Foot-warmer** has a choice of heat levels and fits all size feet. The inner liner is machine washable. Thermostatically controlled. Around £20 from Electricity Board showrooms and leading electrical stockists.



**Above: the Easy Closing Boot** has a zip that opens low down, a large loop and a warm fleecy lining. Water resistant. £33 (plus VAT). P R Cooper (Footline) Ltd, Sycamore Works, Tilton-on-the-Hill, Leics.



**Above: the Flectalon Hypothermic Snuggler.** "This is warm and comfortable," reported Merle Davies. "It's easy to get into since it's designed as a blanket which converts into a bag by fastening with Velcro, and is light and spacious. It's useful as protection from drafts, particu-

# Brr! It's cold outside

Mary Wilkinson looks at clothes to keep you warm

Keeping warm is everyone's pre-occupation at this time of year, particularly if you are slow-moving or immobile.

There is a misconception that clothes make you warm. What they do is to conserve the heat you have already. So it helps to warm yourself (especially hands and feet) and your clothes before you dress, to choose styles and fabrics that trap the air close to your body, and to prevent the loss of body heat by covering as much of yourself as possible, particularly the head which loses a lot of heat.

Clothes which fit snugly round neck, wrists, waist and ankles are better insulators than very loose garments. And closely woven fabrics (think of Guernsey wool sweaters) help to stop the wind penetrating.

Wool, however, is not the only provider of warmth. In fact the fibre or yarn is less important for warmth than the way it is knitted or woven and how the garment is constructed.

Roughly speaking, the thicker the fabric, the better the insulation. So a pile surface like velvet, brushed terry, quilted clothes, linings of fur or synthetic fur, thick socks and textured tights are all good insulators. (But check that tights and socks are not too tight inside shoes - it may mean buying a larger size.)

"Thermal" underwear is usually made from knitted fabric which traps the air in "pockets" and so gives improved insulation. Marks and Spencer does a good range, including "long-

johns", and Damart has many styles to choose from in its mail order catalogue.

There are many new fabrics available now that are warm, light and washable, and work on the principle of trapping air in hollow synthetic fibres. They are often made into anoraks and ski-wear which, of course, need not be just for ski-slopes.

For people who want to keep warm in a wheelchair, a combination of hip length jacket or cape and a wheelchair muff (a bag which reaches to the waist) would be a good choice.

The Simplantex wheelchair muff combines 3 advanced fabrics: Tactel, a tough, stain-resistant nylon cover which is coated with Cyclone, a polyurethane which is both waterproof and allows body moisture to escape, and Libond, a unique hollow-fibre construction that is claimed to conserve 20 per cent more warmth than any other similar fibre on the market. It is washable.

The Hypothermic Snuggler encases the whole body. It is made from Flectalon which in tests on babies has been shown to be a much more efficient insulator than aluminium foil and polyester fabrics. Flectalon is like shredded Christmas tinsel inside quilted fabric. It "breathes", allowing body moisture to escape, and is washable and flame-resistant. A Baby Snuggler is now being developed.

For people who are looking for a warm-up combined perhaps with pain relief, there

are electrically-heated gloves, foot-warmers, and cushions.

Although there is no one BSI standard for electrical equipment, the various parts should conform to BSI standards for electrical equipment and should include an approved thermal cut out.

Sometimes these things can be prescribed by a consultant under the NHS. But you should always consult a doctor who knows the wearer's medical history before buying.

Finally, a method of keeping warm and relieving pain that Jane Bertram, an ex-occupational therapist, originally developed for animals. It is now being used by people, including patients at the Royal Marsden Hospital.

Fire-resistant polystyrene beads are quilted into different fabrics to produce pillows, muffs, waistcoats, mats and sleeping bags. The beads give good insulation and are warm even when wet. They are washable. More research has yet to be done into why the beads ease pain.

*The basic information for this article comes from Clothing: Keeping Warm, a Disabled Living Foundation leaflet (20p) available from the DLF, 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU. For advice and a list of notes and leaflets on different aspects of clothing for disabled people, send an SAE or telephone the clothing adviser, Mrs Peggy Turnbull, 01-289 6111.*

*Fashion Services for the Disabled make made-to-measure clothes and footwear (not shown) to keep you warm, including jackets, catsuits, warm shoes for wheelchair users and quilted spats which open fully and fasten easily, and furry spats. Prices depend upon size and item. Visits by staff can also be made on request to local homes, hospitals and centres to discuss clothing problems. For further details contact Fashion Services for the Disabled, Units B270-B320, Saltaire Workshops, Ashley Lane, Shipley BD17 7SR. Tel: (0274) 597487.*

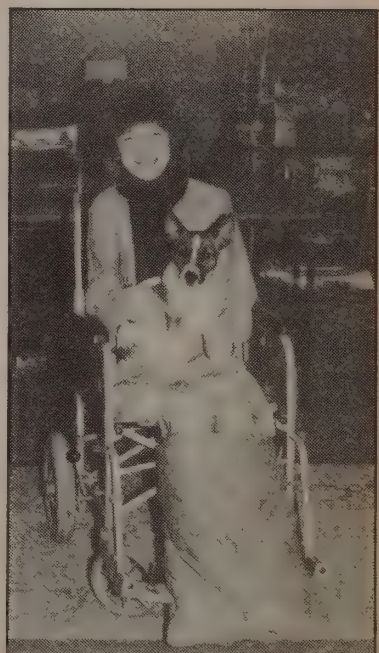
*larly for older people who feel the cold more and may be sitting still for long periods (It could even serve as a sleeping bag indoors.)" £24.95 (plus VAT). Flectalon Ltd, Unit A13, Treforest Industrial Estate, Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan CF37 5UA. Tel: (0443) 853 717.*

Jane Bertram



**Alison Lloyd, who has cp, and Pauline Routledge visited Jane Bertram and tried out some of her clothes. Alison thought the jacket, above, was warm and comfortable. She liked the versatility of sleeves that can zip-in or out.**

**Below, she wears a blue cravat and the footy bag. (The dog is not for sale!) "The cravat is like a surgical collar, but it looks presentable and felt very comfortable. I would wear it instead of a warm scarf." The bag she found softly padded. She thought an extended version would make a good wheelchair muff. Alison also liked very much a square, about 1 yard square, (not shown) which could be wrapped around any part of the body or sat on. She thought it might help prevent pressure sores. Prices seemed reasonable: jacket around £47, cravat £6.95, footy bag £14.90, squares, £6.75 to £15.75. Jane Bertram Products, Grimston, Melton Mowbray, Leics. Tel: (0664) 81251.**



## ALAC Review

*Continued from page 1*  
opted for radical change. "Only a total break with the current organisation and its historic evolution could jolt these services into the state of caring efficiency which is required and which we are sure the taxpayer who funds them, would demand", it said.

Its main recommendation is for a new organisation, independent of the DHSS though funded by it, and answerable to the Minister for the Disabled. Members of the management board should have relevant business experience and some of them should have personal experience of disability.

In the wheelchair service, it wants the prescription and supply of wheelchairs made more cost effective, and a professional

therapist competent to do wheelchair assessment and prescription in every ALAC centre. It wants the wheelchair repair and maintenance service completely overhauled.

The artificial limb service should, says the report, be opened to competition between suppliers. The service should be made more accessible; there should be special units for amputations, and better status and training for limb fitters.

Among 20 detailed recommendations for the wheelchair service are:

- a new cash option so that disabled people can buy extras for their DHSS wheelchair or use the money to buy a wheelchair privately.
- "High performance" and dual-purpose powered wheelchairs for severely disabled people, fi-

nanced from the £11m saving in the service and possibly by abating future increases in Mobility Allowance (by about 30p).

- A low-cost, low performance chair for occasional users.

- A comprehensive range of demonstration models and accessories in every ALAC.

- A prescription signed by the doctor and also by a therapist, specifying the type of wheelchair required.

The report has been welcomed widely.

"It's fantastic," said Kath Savage, chairman of CHIPS (Campaign for Handicapped Independence in Propelled Seats), about the recommendation for a dual-purpose wheelchair.

She herself would not mind foregoing an increase in her Mobility Allowance if it meant getting one. "But it is disabled

people paying once again, isn't it?" she said. "I think the government should find the money because it is responsible for allowing the service to get into this state."

Dr Austin Isherwood, who has spent many years researching the needs of wheelchair users, and artificial limb users, and has experiences of ALACs, was amazed that such a comprehensive report had been published.

"If the proposals are implemented, they should reduce or eliminate the worst features of both the wheelchair and artificial limb services," he said.

While he welcomed the report's emphasis on user requirements as a basis for wheelchair specification, he wondered why crucial research at Loughborough University had been overlooked.

"We welcome the report, especially the recommendation that a suitably accredited therapist should be involved in the prescription of wheelchairs," said Ros Doig. She is therapy services manager at The Spastics Society and her submission to the working party drew on the experience of occupational therapists.

She would like to see ALACs acting as a central source of advice for people buying wheelchairs too. "We receive a lot of complaints from people who have bought expensive wheelchairs and have to pay when they keep breaking down."

She was pleased that the serious gap in provision of wheelchairs for disabled children had been recognised.

Tony Newton, Minister for the Disabled, is referring the report to the NHS Management Board.



## LOCAL GROUP NEWS

Edited by Simon Crompton

### Future of Stockport group is in doubt

The Stockport, East Cheshire and High Peak Spastics Society is in danger of folding after 30 years, if it cannot raise £50,000 before the end of March.

The group, which runs two centres and employs 50 people, opened its Cheddle Lodge short-stay, respite and long-term residential centre last year, but is still reeling from its £250,000 cost.

Part of the problem, says Jock Eggington, the society's fundraising executive, is that Stockport social services is only partially funding the people using long-stay facilities at Cheddle, and the society has to make up the shortfall.

"From the word go at Cheddle, we were under the impression that there was a gentleman's agreement between ourselves and social services that they'd give us £87 a week top up money. But we didn't get it," he says.

The group is also feeling the backlash of the mass publicity given to campaigns such as Band Aid, Children in Need and the Bradford Fire Disaster, he believes.

"It's the smaller organisations like ourselves which have suffered," he says.

The group's 2 fundraisers are pulling out all the stops to raise the money quickly, and have already created a lot of interest.

The irony is, says Jock Eggington, that Cheddle Lodge has really proved its value since it opened.

"For respite care, every weekend is booked up until the end of the year," he says, "and its even busy during the week."

#### News, please!

We rely on local groups to send us their news. Please let us know what's going on in your area. We need to know of events before they happen.

# All the world's a stage: Hornsey especially!

When 15 people with disabilities got together with 4 professional actors in December, the result was an explosive, exhausting mix of hard work and great fun.

A '20s flapper, a Country and Western singer, "Diamond Lil", a bouncer, a shop keeper, a pregnant woman, a policeman and a king were all characters who made appearances at the North London Spastics Association's Drama weekend at their Hornsey Centre in December.

Joan Ross, a North London group member, had a great time: "It was tiring as it was a lot of intensive work, but more relaxing than being at home! At the end, although I was tired, I felt like I'd been on holiday. I especially liked the relaxation exercises, like pretending to float on a magic carpet."

Mary Rutherford, an ex-Royal Shakespeare Company actress, says the workshop was the most mindboggling thing she'd done.

"No concessions were made for lack of experience," she says. "Everyone was expected to do the best they could, and I was really amazed at the results considering everyone was thrown in at the deep end."

"I was astonished at some of the performances. We were asking the participants to do some roles in character situations that I did in my third year at drama school."

The relaxation exercises were on the first day, Saturday, and the actors got everyone who was in a wheelchair out onto mats. But the main aim of the weekend was



A member of Enfield Roteract plays the King of Duckland!

to mime and take other characters through the use of props and make-up, and on Sunday everyone had their chance to be Olivier for the day.

Each participant was given a character to think about and discuss. Then the characters were given individual instructions and everyone was put into a "situation" not knowing how everyone else would act.

"I was a woman who was 9 months pregnant," says Joan Ross. "I had been shopping in

Camden Town and as I queueing up for a tube ticket the baby started coming. There were built-in obstacles to the situation, since all the other characters had been given their roles. Some would try and help me and some would just try to get through the queue."

"The obstacles in the plot helped me be more assertive in my situation," she says, "but I don't need help with that!"

In her role-play, Tina Franklin was the manageress of a dress shop and had to convince a difficult customer to buy a certain dress, unaware that her assistant's role was to dissuade the customer because she wanted the dress. "In the end I convinced that lady to buy a hat instead!" she says.

On Sunday afternoon, everyone was told they could do a star turn - anything they wanted. Joan said that she'd always wanted to be a flapper and do the Charleston.

"I just happened to have the perfect costume with me, with the hat with feather and flapper dress," says Mary Rutherford. "She was wonderful."

Peter Franklin played the guitar and sang a Country and Western song. "I was more self-conscious about the singing than the acting," he says. "It was very difficult to sing, remember the

words and mime on the guitar at the same time!"

As well as members of the North London Group, there were people from The Spastics Society's Kingston Adult House Unit and the Central Middlesex Spastics Society's Pinner Work Centre.

The weekend stemmed from a social event Hillary Lane organised when she first became secretary of the North London Spastics Association - a version of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* by her acting friends Mary Rutherford and Terry McGinty.

It was such a success that chairman John Byworth suggested a follow-up. Hillary organised the drama weekend, using the services of her 2 friends and Mary and Mark McNaughty, who are setting up a community theatre in Southwark.

Ruth Cottrell, development officer of The Spastics Society's London Region, helped with publicity and catering for the weekend, and was let loose in the wardrobe of a West End theatre to collect props and costumes. They were an immediate hit.

"I liked dressing up the best," says Sarah Hughes. "But I liked everything about the weekend, and meeting new people."

Hillary Lane was also impressed with the way people got on. "It was a very happy family situation," she says. "It was so good that Mark McNaughty struck up a friendship with one of the girls in a wheelchair, and they're going to link their computers by telephone so that they can communicate."



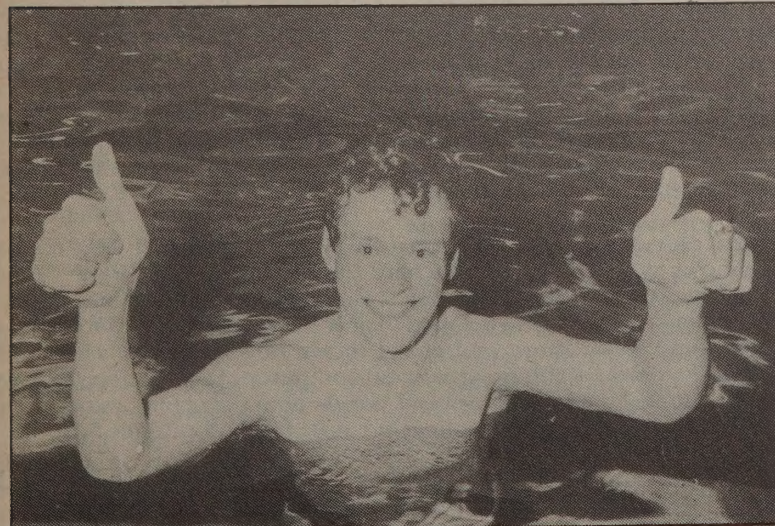
Joan Ross performing the Charleston.



The participants watch their fellow thespians perform. Peter "Country and Western" Franklin wears the top hat.

## Nicholas clocks up a cool million

Accrington Observer and Times



25 year-old Nicholas Younger only started swimming 2 years ago - but he took to it like a duck to water.

Nicholas, who is disabled in his legs and can only use his arms when swimming, set himself a

challenge - to swim a million yards.

The Amateur Swimming Association gives its supreme award to anyone who can swim the magic million in 5 years. Nicholas set himself a year to do it. It

took him just 7 months.

To mark his achievement, the Mayor of Hyndburn presented him with a special award on 13 December.

"It was a challenge really," says Nicholas, who is the son of Bill Younger, ex-chairman of the Blackburn and District Spastics Group and a member of The Spastics Society's regional committee.

"There were moments when I thought I wouldn't do it. Half-way through, I thought 'Oh no, I've got to do all that again.' But then as I approached a million it seemed to get very close very quickly."

Nicholas swam 2 or 3 hours every day, more at weekends, in between looking for jobs - he was unemployed at the start of last year.

Now he has a job as a clerical assistant at Clitheroe Castle.

"I suppose there'll be less time to do it again now," he says.



They have created 6 lakes on their 120 acre livestock farm, where disabled people can fish for trout from special stations. There is also a nature trail, a picnic area, tarmac paths and toilets.



# Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

## My son has hydrocephalus but people think he is silly, lazy or awkward

"Our son John is now 15 and he has what is known as arrested hydrocephalus and mild spasticity.

He does not appear handicapped and, in fact, he is a tall, good-looking boy. It is only when he tries to do practical things or to cope socially that one realises just how disabled he is. His hands and walking are clumsy - in fact he seems to fall over his own feet - and he gets very confused when out of his usual routine or if he has to cope with more than one thing at a time. He spends a lot of time day dreaming - I sometimes wonder exactly what is going through his mind.

People who don't understand about his disability tend to see him as being silly, lazy or awkward on purpose. It is easy to lose patience with him, even if you know that he is brain damaged.

In some ways I almost wish he was more obviously handicapped, as he might get more understanding and sympathy.

It's quite difficult to explain about the effects of his disability, too. John doesn't seem aware of his own problems and I wonder if we should try to discuss the cause of his clumsiness with him? I wish I could talk over our difficulties with other parents facing similar situations.

I fully appreciate your concerns and I agree that a more obvious disability is much easier to understand and explain.

It might be helpful to you and to other readers to have some information about arrested hydrocephalus. The following quotation is from a new publication *Spina Bifida and YOU*, which has been especially written for young people with spina

bifida and/or hydrocephalus.

"You may have been told that hydrocephalus means 'water on the brain'. Well, everyone has water on the brain! Hydrocephalus is when there is *too much* water on the brain.

"A watery fluid called cerebro-spinal fluid is made in the brain. This bathes the cells and fills the spaces in the brain (the ventricles). It flows around the brain and drains away into the blood stream and down the spinal cord. This fluid also acts as a cushion between the skull and brain to protect it from shock or injury.

"Hydrocephalus occurs when there is a blockage of the channel from the centre of the brain to the surface where the fluid should drain away. The brain continues to make more fluid and as a result the baby's head starts to swell.

"The bones in a baby's head are not joined together at birth. They are soft and overlap - to help the head to come down during the process of birth. Because the brain is soft, the spaces in the brain (the ventricles) enlarge to find room for the extra fluid. The brain tissue becomes thin and stretched, and the delicate cells can be damaged permanently.

"Sometimes a baby is born with hydrocephalus and then later the blocked or damaged channel opens, or the fluid finds another way out. The problem of having too much fluid building up in the brain has stopped naturally. This is called arrested hydrocephalus and no treatment is necessary."

When the build-up of fluid does not stop naturally a shunt has to be inserted in the head to take away the excess fluid from the brain.

In the very early stages before the build-up of fluid stopped or was drained away with a shunt, some brain cells may have got damaged. This is probably what will have caused the difficulties that John is facing.

You may like to get a copy of *Spina Bifida and YOU* and go through the relevant chapters with John, or let him read them for himself.

The details about spina bifida will obviously not be relevant,



Simon Crompton

but most of the rest of the book applies to many young people with disabilities. There are lots of practical hints, too, that John may well find helpful.

Talking things over with other parents with similar problems can indeed be reassuring and encouraging and ASBAH has been looking at ways of developing local support groups. A seminar was recently held with twelve parents of children and young people with hydrocephalus (but *not* spina bifida), several members of ASBAH staff and myself, when we considered the most appropriate ways of providing mutual support.

I will put you in touch with the contact person and I do hope that any other readers facing similar problems will write to me so that I can send them details.

*Spina Bifida and YOU*, published in the Young ASBAH series, can be obtained from ASBAH (the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus), 22 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0EP. Tel: 01-388 1382. £3 plus 50p for p and p.

★ A hydrocephalus day is to be held at ASBAH on 5 March. Details from Denise Dunning, telephone above.

## CLASSIFIED

### For Sale

**ELECTRIC PORCH CHAIRLIFT**, suitable for steps 12in to 16in, nearly new. Open to offer. Mrs Bruder Tel: Alfriston 870252.

**METRO 1.3 HLE**, Gowering Chairman wheelchair vehicle. 15,000 miles, reg. 1982. Garage stored. £5,250. Tel: (0446) 734525.

**NEWTON LIGHTWEIGHT SELF-PROPELLED WHEELCHAIR**. Guarantee has 6 months to run. Only used for 10 weeks. £120 ono. Tel: 01-722 4219.

### Holidays

**VARCOE HOUSE HOLIDAY FLATS**. Cornish Spastics Society. Two well-equipped self-catering flats, each to sleep up to 6 people, especially adapted for disabled people. Level access to flats and nearby sandy beach. Ample parking. Seasonal price range £40-160 per week. Off season rate details from Booking Manager, Mr L. E. Elliott, 3 Bosvean Gardens, Illogan, Nr Redruth. Tel: (0209) 218650.

### Find-a-Friend

**YOUNG MAN**, 26, very caring, loving and understanding, seeks young lady (26-30, single or divorced), Homecloving. Must like dogs (have a 2 year-old Labrador), be just as caring, and fun to be with. Also a car owner as mine was stolen. Mr J Drage, 217 Lunedale Road, Dartford, Kent DA2 6HU.

**I AM 31**, have cp (walk with the aid of a stick). My hobbies include knitting, shopping, watching TV. I also have a Doberman called Sasha. Wish to correspond with someone younger and perhaps arrange weekend visit. Contact T1 Harrison. Tel: Colwyn Bay 30527. NB Would Michael Kiddy please contact me.

**PHILIPPE**, 29 years old, doing a MA in Politics at the University of Kent, Canterbury, fluent in French, already with a BA and MA in French Law, handicapped (spastic) with real speech difficulties but easy to understand and completely self-reliant, owns a car, seeks nice, understanding and open-minded lady aged 25-38 for a long, lasting and sincere friendship. She should be ready not to care at all about disability and live in London or Southern England. All replies answered. Write to Philippe Palteau, Keynes College, University of Kent, Canterbury CT2 7NP.

**MOTHER IN SWEDEN** with 2 children with spastic cerebral palsy would like to correspond with parents of disabled children in other countries. Please write to Mrs Laila Nyback, Aland 1526, 870 10 Alandsbro, Sweden.

# What's On

## Courses at Castle Priory

**Dance-Drama Dynamics** - a weekend course led by Wolfgang Stange to develop awareness and creativity skills which can be used with people who have a sensory, intellectual or social handicap. Open to workers from institutions or community settings. Wheelchair users are advised to book early. 7-9 March. Tuition £47, residence £38.

**Perception, Attention and Organisation** - assessing and assisting the needs of young people with perceptual and associated difficulties in both learning and living skills. 9-11 March. Tuition £47, residence £38.

**Modifying Behaviour and Planning Goals** - a practical workshop for nurses, care staff, therapists and others working with adults who have severe learning difficulties or behaviour problems. 17-19 March. Tuition £47, residence £38.

For more information about any of these courses, write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: 0491 37551.

## Conferences and Leisure

**Ethical Issues in Paediatric Nursing** is a study-day taking place on 13 February at The Institute of Child Health in London. Areas to be covered include resource allocation, research interpretation and the rights of a child. Of interest to physiotherapists, nurses, teachers and other professionals, the fee is £15. Further details from Miss S Barlow, Director of Nurse Education, Charles West School of Nursing, 24 Great Ormond Street, London WC1N 3JH. Tel: 01-405 9200.

**Conference for and by Women with Disabilities** is on 14 February at the Tara Hotel in London. It will focus on Employment and disability issues, with workshops and group discussions. For further information write to the GLC, Room 5a, County Hall, London SE1. Tel: 01-633 4630.

**Coping With Handicap** is a day course on 21 February in Northfield, Birmingham. It will look at the physical and emotional impact of handicap, review some of the aids available and discuss ways of enabling disabled people to gain maximum independence. Further details from Age Concern England, Training Department, 60 Pitcairn Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3LL. Tel: 01-640 5431.

**Management of Incontinence** is a day course on Tuesday 25 February at Northfield, Birmingham. Details from Age Concern England, Training Department (address as above).

**Actions for Equality** for people with disabilities is a conference for local authority members and officers on 27 February at County Hall, London. An Anti-Discrimination Code of Practice for local authorities will be launched. Also workshops, including housing, education and transport. Contact GLC Disability Resource Team, Room 92/3, County Hall, London SE1 7PB. Tel: 01-633 8549.

**Women's Theatre Skill Sharing Workshop Weekend**. Women in Entertainment are running a residential weekend from 21-23 March at Halliwick College in London. Women from varied backgrounds will be able to share theatre skills such as drama, music, writing and design, and the workshops should also provide a starting point for building networks for all women in theatre, encouraging integrated casting and companies. For an application form send a sae to Women in Entertainment, 7 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL. Tel: 01-969 2292.

**London Media Workshops**. Details of the 1986 season of short practical courses are now available. They include an "Introduction to Writing for Video" on 3 March, tutored by Rosemary Horstmann (a former Educational Television producer), and "Writing TV Comedy" from 17-18 March, tutored by Jimmy Perry (writer of *Hi-de-Hi* and *Dad's Army*). The fees are £36.95 per day, with reductions for multiple bookings and those working for registered charities. Further details from Sylvia Angel, London Media Workshops, 101 King's Drive, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5BQ. Tel: (0474) 64676.

**Technology and Young People with Special Needs** is a practical course on 7 March at Langside School, Poole, which will review the recent technological developments that help increase the independence of people with disabilities. There will be a small exhibition of aids and computers. Fees: £9 for families, £7 for professionals, £6 for voluntary workers, students, disabled people, relatives, and £5 for ACTIVE (national) members. Further information from Mrs Vandervelde, Langside School, Langside Avenue, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 5BN. Tel: (0202) 518636.

**New Developments in Technology and Disability** is a course being held on 21 March at Richard Cloudesley School, Golden Lane, London EC1 0TJ. It will cover a wide range of technical aids, equipment and techniques developed mainly for young people and emphasise some of the more interesting recent developments. There will also be a small exhibition of aids and computers. Fees: see Technology and Young People with Special Needs above. Further information from Miss Hilary Came, headteacher at Richard Cloudesley School.

**International Rehabilitation Week** is taking place at the Jacob K Javits Convention Center in New York, USA from 6-9 April. Items include a world conference with lectures and discussions by internationally known scientists, doctors, corporate executives and representatives of the arts and government; a medical symposium discussing research and advances made in the diagnosis and treatment of people with disabilities; and workshops demonstrating the latest technology. Further details from Lynnda Targan, Toplin, Hamilton & Associates, 1010 Arch Street, Second Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, USA.



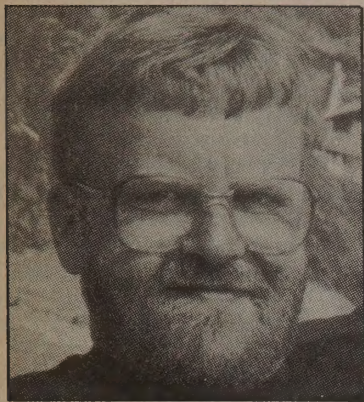
WHAT'S  
BLACK AND  
WHITE, BUT  
RED ALL  
OVER?

See next month



# PEOPLE

## The man to rebuild Meadway



**Jim Slasor**, the new general manager of The Spastics Society's Meadway Works in Birmingham, admits that his job presents a formidable challenge.

"Meadway has potential but lacks pretty near everything at the moment," he says.

"Its product range needs rationalising; it has little in the way of effective marketing and sales techniques and consequently it is very short of orders. Its systems and the records are badly in need of overhaul and its

costing systems are rudimentary."

Jim Slasor started work on 13 January and is taking matters in hand. "My main aim is to produce products we can market, to get turnover and volume up," he says. One of his big challenges is to introduce the new British Standard for quality assurance at Meadway so that the company can continue to be an approved supplier to the DHSS.

Jim Slasor is 42, and previously owned a company making X-ray equipment. Before that he was managing director of another X-ray machinery company and project office manager of the engineering consultants Fraser Nash.

"I went for a change in career," he says. "Rightly or wrongly, I'm used to putting things on their feet. And this is certainly a challenge."

"Things are at such a low ebb now that it's the right time to rebuild with a completely clean sheet."

## The East's new regional manager



Penny Rigby (right) with Jennie Woods (left) and Ann Whittet at this year's AGM.

**Penny Rigby** has taken over as regional manager of The Spastics Society's East region after 16 years at the regional office. Having been acting regional manager since October, she officially took up post on 11 December.

"I hope it will be an advantage, having been around for a while already," she says. "I should be able to build on the relationships I've already established with people in the region. At the same time, I hope I'm receptive to new ideas."

One of her main aims is to get The Spastics Society better

known to the statutory local authorities, and she hopes to do this by starting a regional yearbook. She wants to work closely with The Spastics Society's social services so that services become more receptive to the increasing demands of care in the community.

She has every confidence in the ability of her fundraising team. And with her "petticoat government" of Jenny Woods, (appeals co-ordinator) and Ann Whittet (regional chairman) "we're proving women are the stronger sex!" she says.



Richard Best

## OBITUARY

### Richard Sharp

It is with regret that I report the sudden death of Richard "Dick" Sharp on 2 January.

In 1952 Dick helped to found the Cheltenham and District Spastics Association and was its Chairman.

He was Chairman of the West Regional Committee for 5 years and subsequently Vice-Chairman. He was also Vice-Chairman of the Gloucestershire Association for the Disabled and a member of the Cirencester Group Executive Committee, the Regions Committee and the Social Services Committee.

In November 1985 he was elected a member of the Executive Council.

For 35 years Dick gave freely of himself to further the cause of people with cerebral palsy. As an architect, he used his knowledge and expertise to design small scale residential accommodation for heavily handicapped adults and children. He wrote a booklet, *Housing for the Disabled*, and at the time of his death was involved with two projects to establish family-scale life in the community for handicapped people.

Dick was the iron fist in the velvet glove. His constant and valued support of The Spastics Society was an inspiration and his many friends will miss his common sense, good humour, sincerity and quiet charm. Leaving his body to medical science was the ultimate gesture in his concern for others.

The Spastics Society hopes to arrange a memorial service for him. He leaves a widow, son and 2 daughters, to whom The Society expresses its deepest sympathy.

JS

## Bob Monkhouse collects the first £10,000



Bob Monkhouse, of the Stars Organisation for Spastics, was at the offices of Harvard Securities last month to accept a cheque for £10,000 for The Spastics Society. With him in the picture are Tom Wilmot, managing director (left) and Graham Rule, a dealer (right).

The cheque was the first installment of money raised through Share Care, a scheme by which Harvard Securities give £1 to the Society for every share transaction they complete.

The scheme started in Decem-

ber and runs until 9 March. Anyone want to buy or sell shares?



The Harvard Share Care Seal.



From left to right: Roger Royle, presenter of Good Morning Sunday; actor Bill Pertwee; Elisabeth Darcy and Paul Jones of Ingfield School, and Spike Milligan.

## Teddy Wogan goes to Ingfield

Comedian Spike Milligan presented the mega-sized Teddy Wogan to Elisabeth Darcy and Paul Jones from The Spastics Society's Ingfield Manor School last month, after a performance of *Babes in the Wood* at the Richmond Theatre.

The bear was donated to the

BBC's recent Children in Need appeal by Selfridges store, who then bought him back for £400 before giving him to the children at Ingfield Manor. Now he's standing in The Spastics Society's Park Crescent reception, waiting for a lift to his new home!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Invalid Care Allowance - claim now.** The ICA Steering Group (representing over 50 organisations) is encouraging married women to claim ICA now. This is paid to people who are not working but are caring for a severely disabled person. Up to now a woman who is married or living with a man has not been allowed to claim. However, a test case has been heard by the European Court of Justice and if the case wins, claims will be backdated to the date when they were first made. For an information leaflet contact the ICA, c/o 12 Park Crescent. Tel: 01-636 5020, ext. 231.

**Disability Shouldn't Be a Handicap** is a booklet from the GLC describing the main types of disability, the problems and needs of people with disabilities and how they are discriminated against. There are lists of useful organisations and suggestions on how individuals can help break down barriers in home, school, work and the community. Copies from the GLC Disability Resource Team, County Hall, London SE1 7PB. Tel: 633 8549.

**The Earnley Concourse** is an adult education centre running short courses in computing for disabled people able to operate a keyboard and those working with them. Costs are kept to a minimum and accommodation is available for weekend courses. For a copy of the programme contact The Earnley Concourse, Earnley, Chichester PO20 7JL. Tel: (0243) 670392.

**Electronic Aids Loan Service** offers free loans of second-hand electronic aids to disabled people. The length of the loan is for a minimum of 2 months and according to demand. For further details contact Electronic Aids Loan Service for Disabled People, Willowbrook, Swanbourne Road, Mursley, Bucks, MK17 0JA.

**Voluntary Forum Abstracts** is a bi-monthly publication providing concise summaries of the literature available on voluntary organisations, volunteers, and voluntary action. It is therefore useful for individuals and small organisations who want to keep

up with what is available without subscribing to a costly range of publications. £12.50 per annum from the Information Department, NCVO, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU. Tel: 01-636 4066.

**The Disability Rights Training Programme** for February and March is now available from Disability Alliance. There are day courses on "An Introduction to Disability Benefits", "Attendance and Mobility Allowance", "Benefits and Community Care", "Social Security Appeal Tribunals - Preparing Cases" and "Medical Appeal Tribunals - Preparing Cases". Further information from Disability Alliance, Educational and Research Association, 25 Denmark Street, London WC2 8NJ. Tel: 01-240 0806.

**American Express Travel Competition for disabled people.** American Express, together with Opportunities for the Disabled, are seeking to support enterprise and achievement by disabled people. The prize is free travel to and from a place of

learning or business in Europe, plus 2 weeks accommodation, in September. The competition is to describe in no more than 500 words their achievements, the location of their proposed visit and how the visit will help create jobs, independence and improved career prospects for other disabled people. Closing date for entries is 27 February, and these should be sent to American Express Travel Competition, c/o Opportunities for the Disabled, 1 Bank Buildings, Princes Street, London EC2R 8EU.

**Ford Mobile Assessment Unit.** A therapist and a driving consultant provide a 2 hour car adaptation assessment for anyone with a physical disability who wants to learn to drive or change to a different vehicle. The fee is £36. (Some people, depending on their disability,

may still need to travel to Banstead for a fuller assessment). From February to June the unit will be visiting Gillingham, Portsmouth, Harold Wood, Camborne, Preston and Ilkley. For further details contact Banstead Place Mobility Centre, Park Road, Banstead, Surrey SM7 3EE. Tel: (07 73) 51674.

**Everybody Knows** is the latest film from Dr Barnardo's. It looks at families who are fostering severely mentally handicapped children, showing that fostering can be rewarding and emphasising the importance of the back-up support provided by Dr Barnardo's. For foster parents, social workers and professionals involved in the care of these children.

Available to hire or buy from Dr Barnardo's, Tanners Lane, Barking, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG. Tel: 01-550 8822.





Lord Snowdon presents the special award to Stephen Bradshaw, director of the Spinal Injuries Association.

## 21 disabled students get funds for further education

£16,500 in bursaries has gone to 21 students with disabilities in the fifth annual Snowdon awards.

And a special award of no monetary value went to Stephen Bradshaw, director of the Spinal Injuries Association, for his work in breaking down the barriers that exist for disabled people.

He is a member of the Prince of Wales Advisory Committee on Disability, a campaigner for disabled people's rights and an Olympic gold medal winner in table tennis.

In past years the award has gone to Jimmy Savile, Quentin Crewe, Rosalie Wilkins and Colin Low.

All this year's bursary winners are taking, or about to take, courses in further education, and need extra funds to help them pay for fees, transport or special equipment. The awards range from £2,000 to £100.

Allan Wall, for example, who is 20 and has cerebral palsy, is studying for a degree in computing at Manchester University's Institute of Science and Technology. He required an electric wheelchair to enable him to have independent mobility around the university, and the Snowdon award scheme has

made a contribution to its cost.

Michael Smith, 19, has a hereditary motor and sensory disability. As his ability to write is limited by his disability, he needed help to buy computer equipment to write projects and notes for his Honours degree in Pure Maths and Computer Science at Reading University. He was awarded £500.

There were hardly any disabled applicants who needed assistance for training rather than further education.

The Snowdon Awards are administered by Action Research for the Crippled Child, and based upon a trust fund set up by the Earl of Snowdon.

The ceremony on 9 January was hosted by the National Westminster Bank, who this year donated £25,000 to the award scheme.

For Lord Snowdon's speech, see page 3.

If you would like to apply for an award write to The Secretary, Snowdon Award Scheme, Action Research for the Crippled Child, Vincent House, North Parade, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2DA.

## Clarke Bill

Continued from page 1  
doubtedly turned against disabled people," she says.

"And what is wrong with a demand-led service?" she asks. "I know the ACC qualified its statement by expressing concern about financial implications, but it is sad that the Association seems to be resisting the move towards greater consumer involvement."

On the last point, she supports John Hannam, Conservative MP and a sponsor of the Bill, who argued that far from increasing bureaucracy, the Bill would streamline.

The ACC's interpretation of its existing duties under the 1970 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act differs from those of RADAR, The Spastics Society and other charities who have sought guidance from the DHSS.

Responding to the ACC paper, Peter Mitchell of RADAR said, "When disabled people read how the ACC has been condoning their deception for 15 years by councils deliberately con-

cealing the true assessment of their needs by professional staff, I would advise some distinguished heads to duck well below the parapet."

Amanda Jordan thinks that perhaps the voluntary sector has not been vigorous enough in supporting local authorities over their genuine difficulties about resources. Indeed, the ACC prepared its paper under threat of further cuts in the Rate Support Grant.

"Nevertheless, I feel it is both disappointing and short-sighted of them to join with the Government in opposing the Bill rather than allying themselves with disabled people and calling for an adequately funded service," she says. "Until we get better information, planning and representation of disabled people in decisions affecting their own lives, they will never be equal partners in the battle."

Tom Clarke has pledged that any attempt by the Government to substantially dilute the Bill will be resisted.

## Cash boost for disabled groups in London

The Inner London Education Authority is giving over £100,000 to schemes helping people with disabilities as part of a £½ million package to improve education opportunities for socially disadvantaged people throughout inner London.

A total of 180 projects are to be financed through the ILEA's Community Initiative Fund this year. More than half of them are in ILEA adult education centres, the rest run by voluntary organisations.

70 involve people with disabilities, and range from providing interpreters for people with hearing difficulties to swimming projects.

£2,200 will be given to Hoxton Hall in Hackney so that a drama project for mentally handicapped women and girls can put on public performances.

The Albany Garden Project in Lewisham, which teaches physically disabled, mentally handicapped and mentally ill people gardening, will receive £1,180.

Neil Fletcher, chair of the ILEA's Further and Higher Education Sub-Committee said: "Aid like this is going to become even more important in the coming years as government cuts bite deeper and London's voluntary sector feels the full impact of losing the massive GLC grants programme."

## VAT relief: hopeful signs

With the Budget on 18 March, the Charities' VAT Reform Group has presented its most detailed submission yet to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

There have been indications from the Treasury that it will meet with some success. A Minister has said the submission will receive very careful consideration.

It defines 4 areas where VAT proves a special hardship to charities: services which support the statutory sector, building alterations, advertising and medicines and drugs.

An early day motion, number 275, on VAT and charities has also been tabled.

## Disability Now

Published by The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020.

Editor Mary Wilkinson  
Assistant Editor Simon Crompton  
Editorial Secretary Kathy Johnson

Circulation Gayle Mooney  
Advertising Don E. Neal, Kingslea Press Ltd., Central Buildings, 24 Southwark Street, London SE1 1TY. Tel: 01-403 3115.

Typesetting by Foremost Typesetting Ltd., 56 Carter Lane, London EC4.

Printed by NewsWeb Ltd., Hastings (0424 52811) and 108 Temple Chambers, Temple Avenue, London EC4. Tel: 01-583 3190.

The views expressed in *Disability Now* are not necessarily those of The Spastics Society.

Copyright © 1986 The Spastics Society.

## White Paper campaign gets Labour backing

200 people from all over the country, around 150 of them disabled, came to County Hall in London on 15 January to protest at the Government's social security white paper. If the proposals become law, it is feared that many people with disabilities will be worse off.

Robin Cook, the Labour Party's campaign co-ordinator, was there and pledged to put out a campaign circular to all Labour MPs urging them to take up the issue of the white paper on behalf of disabled people.

One of the speakers was Professor Peter Townsend, chair-

man of the Disability Alliance, who said "How can any respect be found for those who place the needs of the poorest at the heart of their proposals for social security, and show no wish to examine those needs?"

Other speakers included Peter Large (parliamentary advisor for the Disabled Income Group), Rachel Hurst (chairperson of the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People) and Jill Allen (Royal National Institute for the Blind).

After the meeting, some people crossed Westminster Bridge to lobby their MPs.



Speakers at the conference. From left to right: Linda Lennard of Disability Alliance, Peter Townsend, Jill Allen, Robin Simpson of the National Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux, Peter Large and Rachel Hurst.

## Press campaign needs action

Chris Davies reports: The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom held its first public meeting last month to discuss how people with disabilities are presented by the media.

56 people turned up at the NALGO headquarters in London, most of them with some disability.

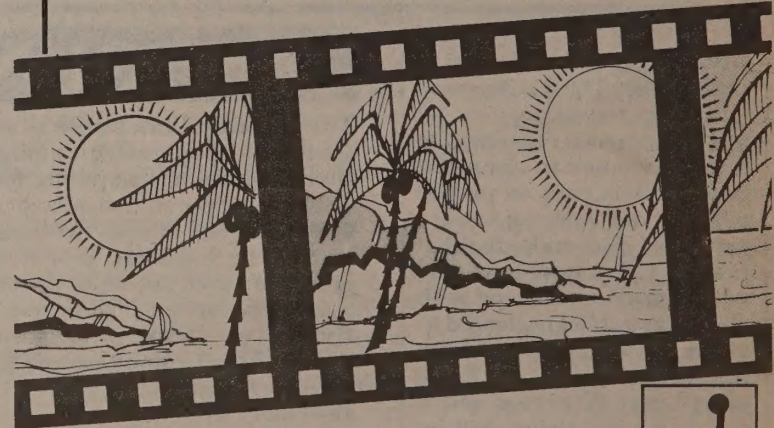
There was a great feeling of solidarity. Everyone who spoke agreed that the press and television misrepresent disabled people in many ways. Those representing the interests of deaf peo-

ple, including Maggie Woolley and Clive Mason from *See Hear!* complained of too few programmes and the use of incorrect terminology to describe people with disabilities.

Being a meeting of the converted, agreement was complete and eventually repetitive.

Although we thought the aim of the meeting was to set up a steering committee of disabled people which would formulate guidelines to put matters right, no time was left to get it off the ground.

## JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE DISABLED....



... there's no limit to your choice of holiday for you, your family or friends, when you go with Threshold. Send for our 1986 Brochure, Bigger and Better than ever before. There's bound to be something for you.



As featured on the ITV "WISH YOU WERE HERE" Programme

For FREE colour brochure send this coupon NOW! or Telephone 061-236 9763

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Threshold Travel LTD

Wrendal House, 2 Whitworth Street West, Manchester. M1 5WX